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Sofia Kioroglou

ABBOT IGNATIUS RAKSHA OF HEBRON

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Abbot Ignatius Raksha of Hebron - Condensed Biography
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Abbot
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"Evil triumphs only in the eyes of men of little faith. The True Orthodox Christians of these last days are defeated on every front: mocked by the world and threatened by Ecumenism, despised, persecuted. And yet for one thing they are unconquerable: they stand in the truth. And thus, as our God is Truth, their ultimate victory is certain."

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Ignaty (Raksha) of Hebron, Abbot (d. 1986)
Orthodox Life,Vol. 36, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1986), pp. 36-39

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While it's hard to wrap our minds around, holiness is the character and nature of God. Therefore, when God called the Israelites out of the bondage and decay of the pagan Egyptian culture, He called them to be holy like Him.

"For I, the LORD, am the one who brought you up from the land of Egypt, that I might be your God. Therefore, you must be holy because I am holy,"(Leviticus 11.45 NLT)

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"Thou shalt not bow"

Universal Apostasy
"You will know when you see
your husband in the gates,
sitting among the elders of the land"

Devil and Antichrist
prowl around like a roaring lion

Seeking to devour
Open your eyes

The Mystery of Iniquity
will meet you at the city gates

seeking to devour
thou shalt not bow

(Sofia Kioroglou)

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From Irina Raksha's diary

On the bank of the Ostankino pond. On the left is the Holy Trinity Church. On the right is the Manor. Sheremetyevsky Palace.

Irochka is 6 years old. Stands on the "Funny" hill in the park of the Sheremetyevsky Palace.

Irina with her mother (Nina Raksha) go for a walk in the park. Photo: at the barrack house on 3rd Ostankinskaya Street.

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Irina's email to me

Dear Sophia .... Thank you for the news and it's good that it's in Russian. Thank you for the memory of my relative, the amazing and beautiful Abbot Ignatius (Ivan Raksha). Yes, I have both photographs and some documents of him and about him. I think I need to scan them all and then send them to you over the Internet. My confessor, the priest who nurses me, blessed me for this. As soon as I do this, I will immediately share it with you. With pleasure. People should know about Abbot Ignatius widely and everywhere. And it depends on us. My postulate: "The fate of those who left depends on those who remain. Irina Raksha.

And you, please, write to me who YOU are, where you live, what you do, and why (besides the feeling of love) you decided to write about Ivan Raksha.

Everything about me is on the site "PROZA-RU. Irina Raksha 'My biography and merits, etc. at the very beginning of the Table of Contents' Planet 'IRINARA', about the author.'

I wish you all the best, health and God's help.

Cordially. Irina Raksha.

Cordially.

Irina Evgenievna Raksha

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Irina's testimony to the death of her uncle

My dear, my golden sister in Christ, Sofia. Christ is risen! .. He is truly risen! .. I am very glad for your letter, your messages ... Soon I will send you my essay about my uncle and how I went to the oak of Mamre on my first trip to the Holy Land in 1991, how I met there with his eternal cell-attendant (still a pre-war friend), the elder George (he now lies in the chapel next to the abbot Ignatius). The cell-attendant, George, told me about my uncle, about his death from poisoning, and so on. This story of his and mine, too, you can add to your book. And translations into English and Russian are very much needed... And after receiving my story, I advise you, Sophia, to send it all together to Moscow, to the patriarchy. And to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and to the foreign department, Mr. Legoyda. They can help a lot. And with translation too. Thank you Sofia for remembering me in your prayers. Thank you. And I will remember you. We are sisters in Christ. Stay healthy and God bless you. Special thanks for the photo. Send me your photo too.

Give my regards to your family, husband. Happily. Irina.

Cordially,
Irina Evgenievna

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Irina's invitation

My dear, my golden Sophia!!! What joy you gave to my heart by sending a book about my uncle Abbot Ignatius. It's fine. And this is your great work, the work of both your soul and your heart. Thank you 1000 times for it. My house is always open for you and I will be glad to see and hear you. I hope you have also received my letter with photographs of Abbot Ignatius, a person dear to us.

Once again, I bow to you.

Cordially.
Irina Evgenievna

Irina's love for this project

Dear, dear Sophia. I am always glad to receive your letters, your holy messages, your wonderful words... And for your love for our precious father Ignatius, I extend to you special thanks. God bless you a thousand times, dear Sophia and your loved ones, Yours,

Irina Raksha

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A *miraculous encounter through* Facebook

Hello,

I am Tania Tchistiakova.

After decades of trying to find any information about Fr. Ignatius Raksha, I found you. I met him in 1974, and have since wondered why he has not been canonized by the church, as the man was undoubtedly and beyond question a true saint. I would very much like to purchase your book. I live in the u.s.

Thank you,

Tania

Comment from Tania Tchistiakova *on* Ivan Raksha

Hello Sofia,

I started reading your book last night! I am shocked that so many priests I have spoken to were not at all familiar with him. Interesting that he knew people's names and what they needed, and more confirmation about the candles. seems that the holy ones are only visible to a few. Remarkable how just a photo lead you down this road. Thank you again for the book and for bringing Fr. Ignatius to a broader public!

Tania Alexander

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Wonders will never cease

My encounter with Tania has really been a true blessing. It was the beginning of an exhilarating journey unleashing unexpected twist to our quest. More specifically, after our crossing of paths, I rushed enthusiastically to share a titbit of information on Father Ignaty that is a complete shocker. I sent her a video with photos of Saint John Maximovitch and Father Ignaty together. Yes, Hegoumen Ignaty was the spiritual child of our beloved Saint John. But read on to learn how God works and how everything happened in a manner that would normally transcend human intelligence. Upon watching the video, Tania shoots back an astonishing email along those lines:

– Interesting. St. John Maximovich was a very dear friend of my family. When my father was young he was his altar boy, and later a friend. About St. John, my mother always liked to remember how my father and she went to see him before embarking on their journey from France to America. They said:

– Father pray for us. On the 22, when we set off to America, and he'd say yes, I'll pray for you on the 28.

– No Father we're leaving on the 22nd.

– Yes, yes, he said. I'll pray for you on the 28.

Needless to say, their trip was delayed and they left just as hepredicted, on the 28th!

Saint John Maximovitch in the foreground with Fr Ignaty

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Tania's encounter with the Hegoumen of Hebron

It was 1974. I was in a bad relationship and needed to get away. Jerusalem, I thought, was a far enough way from New York to do the trick. When I arrived at the convent in Gethsemane they gave me a small cell, I helped out when needed, and did some icon restoration. One day someone came by with a van and said they were going to the church in Hebron. I was eager to join them. The van was full. We had about 8 people, or however many people a large van holds and the driver. After going through various check points, we arrive at the church, we file out and stand in a tight group alongside the van. A priest comes running over, directly towards me and says 'Tania, I have been waiting for you, come', and immediately whisked me off to church where he performed a rite over me. I have no knowledge what this rite was, even after asking many priests about it no one was able to recognize it. After that, we all gathered in the dining room for refreshments. Later he prepared a cigar box for me with dried leaves from the old oak, and back we went to Jerusalem. Soon thereafter, it was Easter. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was packed. I was standing on the ground floor by the columns, Father Ignatius, was all the way in the back on the balcony. Everyone was waiting for the Holy Light to descend. Before the 'official'

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light descended there was suddenly a lot of noise coming from the far corner of the balcony. Fr. Ignatius' candle had lit on it's own. Only later was it followed by the 'official' light in the Holy Sepulcher. I was standing next to a woman who came all the way from Australia just to witness it. I suddenly grabbed her and dragged her away as a huge bolt of lightning descended and stopped at my feet. The woman from Australia, saw nothing. later as we headed back from the service, everyone I walked with couldn't stop talking about Fr. Ignatius and his candle. It was a long time ago, but I will never forget the priest who ran up to me saying 'Tania, I have been waiting for you, come'. The man was an undeniable saint.

The testimony of Archimandrite P. K

Dear sister in Christ Sophia,

My message is going to make you happy as it made me happy. During my recent visit to my homeland, Cyprus, I spoke with an Archimandrite who had been in Jerusalem for many years.

Among other things, I asked him if he had met Saint Ignatius in Hebron and he told me the following wonderful event.

"I met him in 1985 early after the Christmas of 84. I went to the Monastery of St. Trinity in Hebron. And after I had entered the temple, I found Father Ignatius. After we talked

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for about an hour and a half, he read me a prayer and I went out into the courtyard alone. There I saw Father George's fellow ascetic and I tried to explain to him that (all right, I found the one I was looking for), I saw the old man. In my attempt, Father George was trying to explain to me that the old man does not speak Greek. He was talking some incomprehensible jargon along those lines: My name is Georgios and some other things in his own language that I could not really get my head around.

After this story continued for a while, I said to him "You won't drive us crazy, I'll go to the old man, since I was talking to him a while ago anyway". Approaching the door of the church, Father Ignatios comes out holding a cardboard that says in Greek:

'Excuse me, I don't speak Greek.'

They spoke for an hour and a half, each in their own language, and understood each other with the energy of the holy spirit as if they were speaking the same language as it happened with the apostles!!!

Ps. I got the Father's permission if you want to include it in your book provided that only his initials are written.It is called Archimandrite P. K.

May we have the wishes of the saint.

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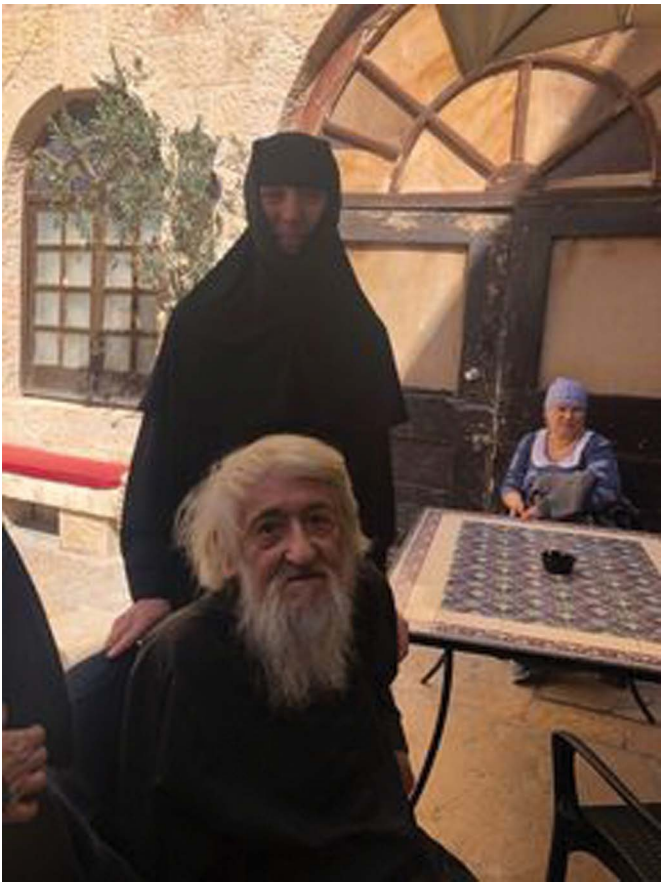
Father Philaret's account and photo credit

I met him twice. His close spiritual father, an ascetic, lives in Jerusalem. He is 100 years old and his name is Isaac Giddis.



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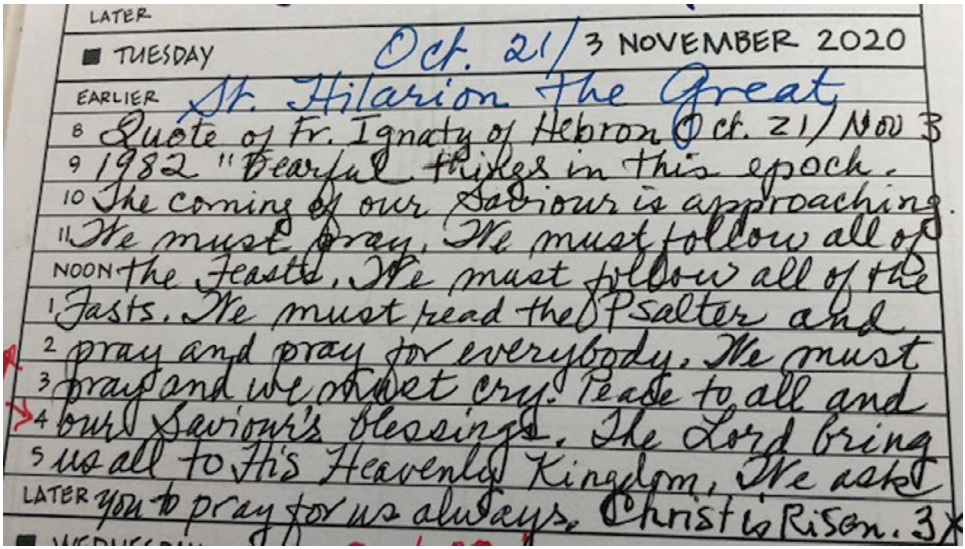
Matuska Xeni

On 26th June 2021, Matuska Xeni from Boston contacted me, granting me the courtesy of making public the following excerpt with the words of our beloved Fr. Ignatius, during the visit to the Holy Land of Abbess Seraphema, from the Holy Monastery of Nativity in Boston, in 1982.


LATER
TUESDAY Oct. 21/3 NOVEMBER 2020
EARLIER St. Hilarion The Great
8 Quote of Fr. Ignaty of Hebron Oct. 21/Nov 3
9 1982 "Fearful strikes in this epoch.
10 The coming of our Saviour is approaching.
11 We must pray. We must follow all of
NOON the feasts. We must follow all of the
1 fasts. We must read the Psalter and
2 pray and pray for everybody. We must
3 pray and we must cry. Peace to all and
4 our Saviour's blessings. The Lord bring
5 us all to His Heavenly Kingdom. We ask
LATER you to pray for us always. Christ is Risen. 3X

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Father Ignatius in the Holy Land

In Hebron, there is a small cemetery located behind the temple of The Holy forefathers, at which some prominent figures of the Russian emigration are buried. Among them, a well-known and respected elder – Hegumen Ignatius (Raksha). Hegumen Ignatius (Ivan in the world) was a native of the Crimea, he served in the White Army, then, in the rank of junior officer, he came to Germany, where he became the inhabitant of the Monastery of St. Job of Pochaev. From Germany in 1950 he moved to the Holy Land. From 1950 to 1960, Father Ignatius carried the obedience of the economist of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem in the jurisdiction of the ROCA. Since 1964, Father Ignatius was in charge of the Russian site under the Mamvrian Oak and was the rector of the church of Sts. The forefathers, where for many years in the postwar period he served practically alone. The elder devoted almost a whole day to prayer, his name consisted of 25,000 names that he remembered at each Liturgy, and proskomidia lasted several hours. People who knew the old man from the Russian Diaspora tell that shortly before his righteous death, he was honored with the vision of “Three Mysterious Wanderers”. A lot of people came to him for spiritual advice and prayer support, including the nuns of the Gornensky monastery in Jerusalem, all of whom the elder received with love. Father Ignatius rested in the Lord

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in 1986. To this day, the flow of pilgrims to Hebron does not stop, wishing to touch the living pages of ancient biblical history and bow to the witness of Abraham's hospitality as a symbol of great, active love for God and neighbor.

Ignatius Raksha holding the wonder-working icon of Kazan

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Ignatius (Raksha)

Father Ignaty Raksha emanated from the Crimea. Ivan Raksha (1906-1986) was an immigrant who received a monastery near Munich and received the name Ignatius. He was sent from the Diocese of foreign Orthodox churches in Palestine to Hebron, to the Oak of Mamvriy in Palestine in 1938. There were 14 monks led by Abbot Ignatius who was very beloved by all Palestinian Orthodox, a native revered old man. In the years of the mismanagement of Russian lands in Palestine, he built near the eternal Oak (from savings, the pennies he collected from pilgrims around the world) - a church. Since 1964, Abbot Ignatius Raksha (Ivan in the world) was in charge of the Russian site under the Mamvrian Oak and was the rector of the church of Sts. The Forefathers, where for many years in the postwar period he served practically alone. The elder devoted almost a whole day to prayer, his names consisted of 25,000 names that he remembered at each Liturgy, and proskomidia lasted several hours. People who knew the old man from the Russian Diaspora tell that the Holy Light always descended and lit up his candles. “He didn’t know Greek but shortly before the Greek pilgrimage groups departed from the Monastery, he gave each a piece of paper with the solution to the problem written on it.

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Monasticism

Great zeal, fervent faith, and unity prevailed among the first Christians. They were ready to witness Christ unto death. But with time, especially following the official recognition of Christianity in the Roman Empire (Edict of Milan, in 313 a.d.), the high ideals which singled out the early Christians, started to weaken. Men and women who feared that the lure of comfort and security could divert them from their search for unity with God, left all behind and made their way into the desert, at first singly, then in loosely formed groups.Christian monasticism originated in Egypt. (St Paul of Thebes - Jan. 15; St Anthony the Great - Jan. 17; St Macarius the Great - Jan. 19; St Pachomius the Great - May 15; St Onuphrius the Great - June 12.) From Egypt it spread to Palestine, Asia Minor and the West. In the Holy Land monasticism flowered in the fourth and fifth centuries, under St Chariton the Confessor (Sept. 28), St Euthymius the Great (Jan. 20) and especially under his disciple, St Sabbas the Sanctified (Dec. 5). To this age belong the Monastery of Studion in Constantinople (founded in 463) and St Catherine's on Mt Sinai (founded by Emperor Justinian the Great in 560), which is still functioning, harboring a great treasure of manuscripts and holy icons which escaped the ravages of the iconoclastic persecutions. With time, there developed in all Orthodox countries a rich and distinctive monastic tradition. Each could boast

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of important spiritual centers which spread their light over all the Orthodox world. Foremost among them were the monasteries of: Mount Athos; Patmos in Greece; the Kiev-Cave Lavra; the St Sergius-Trinity Lavra; the Optina Hermitage in Russia; the Rila Monastery in Bulgaria; the Tismana and Neantu in Romania; the Ochrid, Studenitsa and Zica in Serbia.By the seventh century Palestine had many individual ascetics living in caves and deserts, and boasted numerous monasteries and convents. History tells us that the Mount of Olives alone had over 70 Armenian convents of all sizes scattered about it. The invasions of the Persians (614), Arabs (638), and the Crusaders (1099) eventually left the Holy Land devastated, and most of the monasteries and convents in ruins. The eighteenth century sees the beginning of restoration of some of the monasteries, and this work continued into the twentieth. Today, besides the Lavra of St Sabbas the Sanctified, known locally as Mar-Saba (which was never destroyed), stand the monasteries: near Bethlehem - St Theodosius the Great; in Wadi-Kelt - St George the Hozebite; near Jericho - St Gerasimos on the Jordan; on the Mountain of Temptations; on the River Jordan - St John the Baptist and in Jerusalem -- the Monastery of the Cross (never fully destroyed). Unfortunately, the brotherhood in all but the Lavra numbers only two or three monks.Nevertheless, monasticism in the Holy Land continues, inspired by examples of the ascetics who labored here before.

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Introduction

This book is inspired by my pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Sinai. A lot of pictures accompanied by captions transport the reader to the places where Abbot Ignaty Raksha lived and struggled with the demon.The book sprang out of my need to communicate to others my personal quest for his life. I sincerely hope that my writings will speak to your heart and this edition will be the jumping-off point for a better acquaintance with the life and trials of Father Ignaty Raksha.May the Grace of The Holy Spirit visit upon you and kindle your interest to walk where our Lord Jesus Christ walked , worked miracles, was crucified, resurrected and ascended.

Amen.

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The Holy Hegumen of Tears

Excerpt from the interview of Archimandrite Chrysostomos Tavoulareas to Alexandra Nikiforova

– We usually serve the Liturgy beginning after the prayer, "Blessed is the Kingdom..." in an hour and a half " says Archimandrite Chrysostomos Tavulareas. But no matter what prayers he pronounced, Fr. Ignatius would bend his knee, and tears would be streaming ceaselessly from his eyes! We began the services at three in the morning and ended at 11:30 in the morning. His whole being was immersed in the prayers. His arms would be raised. When he prayed he never allowed himself to be distracted by any conversation. We received Holy Communion and pronounced the dismissal. It was close to noon! I had stood on my feet for eight or nine hours! Then we went into the house by the church; Fr. Ignatius took out some dried bread, some sweet red wine that he made himself, and some olives. We drank the wine, in which we soaked the dried bread, and ate the olives. I have been a priest for thirty-five years, but I will never forget such reverence and such a Liturgy (not the fatigue, but the Liturgy itself)! After I became an abbot, they would bring me his wine for the Liturgy—it was red, sweet, and without any additives. Fr. Ignatius was a holy man! He reposed in the 1980s—I can't remember exactly when—in Hebron where he served all his life, and was buried there. He never

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washed! He went around in worn-out shoes without socks. His hair was tangled like threads. His black nylon cassock was oil-soaked, because as I recall he would light 150 lamps himself. At 2:00 a.m. he rang the bell and for an entire hour afterwards he would light a lamp before every saint—here, there, and everywhere—and make prostrations. Oil dripped down his hands and onto his habit... He had a purse in which he kept an icon of the Mother of God of Kazan, and when you wanted to kiss his hand he would take out this icon. There was simply a fragrance coming from him! He was a real saint. I have never known any other person like him in my life!

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On a day trip to Hebron

Testimony of Dvorkin Alexander Leonidovich

I was warned that Hebron is an Arab Muslim place and, moreover, not the safest, and they persuaded me not to take risks and not to go there alone. But it seemed that this journey of mine was extremely necessary, and yet I was determined to find the way. Palestinian July is very hot, and I, by a sinful act, went everywhere in shorts, and wore a scarf on my shoulder. Approaching churches and monasteries, I put on a Kazakh and got inside in already good condition. So, it was this time, when I approached the monastery of Hebron. The area was surrounded by a fence. The gate turned out to be closed, and I began to knock. This monastery then belonged to the Church abroad, and I was a member of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America. Relations between the churches were, to put it mildly, unimportant, and I did not know how they would meet me

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and allow me to go in. The gate was opened by a very aged monk, who, as I afterwards learned, was Father George. He took me in, to an entirely empty temple, where we were met by a very old priest, the Archimandrite Ignatius, whom I still remember in prayers. Gray-bearded, bent father Ignatius always wore on his chest in a special canvas bag an ancient heavy icon of the mother of God . He greeted me, in a not very friendly manner ,and rather harshly asked where I was from. Instead of answering, he took the picture out of his bag and lifted it before me, and I venerated it. So, father Ignatius took care and learned I was an Orthodox and that I did not deceive him, and was very happy. He said that he had nothing against the American church, that it does not matter how it happened historically, as the Russian people belong to different jurisdictions, but he does not recognize any animosity between the Orthodox, etc. God sent me to them in answer to their glorious prayer. The fact is that on that day there was a memory of a small earthquake, which was in Jerusalem, in my opinion, in 1927, there were only three monks in the monastery, and the third was seriously ill and could not get out of bed. (Vladimir) Ignatius was about ninety years of age, and father George, whom father Ignatius thought very young, and treated him like a boy – under seventy. No one came to the mass of the feast, and where were the parishioners to come from in this Moslem city? there was no one to carry the Cross in procession. Father Ignatius said that it was necessary that

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I should not leave the temple, and prayed that God would send him such a person, until at last I appeared .. “That’s why the Lord brought me here today and now,”I thought. We began to prepare for the procession, but then the door bell rang again. Father George went and returned, accompanied by several persons, presenting them as pilgrims from Yugoslavia. I was glad that the participants in our procession arrived, but father Ignatius was not so quick: he again took his picture from the bag and stood before them. The Yugoslavs (and I never found out what part of Yugoslavia they were from) hesitated a little, and Ignatius revealed that they were anti-believers. Instantly, like a sword in mockery, he moved his image in a scabbard and disappeared on the altar. Adventists, smiling awkwardly, began to say that God is one for all, etc., I, not knowing how to support the debate and what to say, trampled on the spot. And father George was silent. Suddenly the royal gates opened, and father Ignatius appeared, already in the stole and in the phelonion. The picture still hung on his breast under the cassock . In one hand the priest held a bowl of holy water, in the other a cross and began to cast crosswise at the Adventists. Father Ignatius at once, like a sword in mockery, moved his image in a scabbard and disappeared at the altar. Adventists, smiling awkwardly, began to say that God, they say, one for all, etc., I, not knowing how to support the debate and what to say, was trampled on the spot. And father George he was silent. Suddenly the royal gates opened, and father Ignatius ap-

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peared, already with the pavlachium for the phelonion. The picture still hung on his breast under the robe. In one hand the priest held a bowl of holy water, in the other one. Cross he began to cast crosswise at the Adventists proclaiming aloud : “repent , heretics, repent as long as it is not too late!” Father George locked the door behind them. And father Ignatius took him to to the side ! “What are you, George? for letting anyone into the temple of God! ? “Didn’t you see whether they are Orthodox or not? That sort of people are not supposed to be here! “ Frankly, a more absurd situation is difficult to imagine. One sultry Palestinian afternoon, three strangely dressed men walk around the Temple (who could have understood that it was the Holy Trinity ?). On one side, bent, wanders the nineteen-year-old father Ignatius with his image around his neck, in his hands he carries the Gospel and a large Censer on a heavy bronze base. On the other hand, 70-year-old father George, loaded with an L candle and a bowl of holy water with a sprinkler, rushes, twirling to put the incense in the censer Father Ignatius, who trembled with weakness. In front of procession I with a huge cross on a long pillar. In addition, we stop at every corner, read The Gospel, remember some kind of earthquake, which was unknown when it was there, and it is not clear what it has to do with us today. But almost never before have I experienced a greater spiritual uplift in my own experience and experienced the Apostle’s words that our faith ” is temptation to the Jews,

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but madness to the Greeks," and that "the madness of the world has been chosen by the Lord to shame the sensible and wise. We then returned to the temple, exhibited ourselves, and went to a small monastic refectory, where I had the honor of experiencing all the hospitality of so wonderful father Ignatius. With pleasure he began to feed me: he pulled out a pot of thick vegetable soup based on sour cabbage from the window sill and began to warm it. "The soup is freshthey cooked it yesterday," he thanked me. You cooked yesterday; and all night and another half day you stood on the window-sill . In the Palestinian heat. I thought I was getting bloated. But I was just starting to recover from a serious gastrointestinal infection and only ate breadcrumbs! Father Ignatius laid on the table a plate with a smoked beverage, in which he generously poured olive oil almost on his finger and moved it to me. What was I supposed to do? I crossed myself and started eating in a hope that I would have time to reach my habitat before it cornered me again. As you can guess, of course, nothing like this happened, and my stomach for the rest of my stay in the Holy Land no longer bothered me. Father Ignatius flatly refused to let me go home alone. "It's very dangerous here, and Christians don't go here alone," he said, ordering me a taxi and paying for it. He was really a holy man, in spite of his hard exterior, full of ardent, active love. There were elements of folly about Christ in his conduct, and he walked with simplicity be-

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fore the Lord. Now neither he nor father George is on Earth. More than enough time has passed since then After 20 years I can't stop remembering them both and the feat of the testimony of Christ they transferred to their place in very difficult circumstances.

A *true confessor of faith*

At the end of the book, there is a comprehensive explanation of Sergianism which Father Ignaty so much objected to. Father Ignaty was like a red rug to a bull, allow me to use this metaphor, as he was an avid supporter of the patristic tradition and never compromised any of the indisputable truths of the Gospel. This could account for the fact that no initiatives has so far been taken to write any books on him or open his wonder- working grave. In the 1970s, the superior of the Hebron monastery, spiritual son of Saint John Maximovitch, Hegumen Ignaty, neither allowed members of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territory of the monastery (he drove them away with a stick!) nor commemorated the Patriarch of Jerusalem (although he had friendly relations with some members of that patriarchate). A former member of the Catacomb Church and a close friend of St. John Maximovich, Fr. Ignaty had the gifts of tears and prophecy and was revered as a saint even by the Muslims. He feared God alone, and therefore even the enemies of the faith, sensing his spiritual power, sought to kiss the hem of his

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garment as he walked the streets of Jerusalem. His example shows how ROCOR could have acted, relying on the power of faith alone. And even after Fr. Ignaty's repose in 1986, there continued to be ROCOR clergy in Jerusalem who followed his example. Thus, a close friend of Fr. Ignaty's, Archimandrite Nektary (Chernobyl), who had been a member of the Catacomb Church in Russia and died in 2000, said that "the Hegoumen of Hebron never communed with clergy of jurisdictions entering into the ecumenical World Council of Churches. He openly reproached representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate who had betrayed Holy Orthodoxy" (Vospominania, Jordanville, 2002, p. 9). He was indisputable an anti-sergianist catacombite father who lamented the parlous state of the Orthodox Church and openly refused to commune with them which goes to prove that the Holy Spirit visits upon those who battle for Evangelical truth and genuine freedom of conscience.

The testimony of Mrs *Sofia Kouna*

Sofia Kouna who granted me the courtesy of an interview from Attica has witnessed the holiness of Fr Ignaty. She describes : – Every Easter, the Holy Fire descended and lit his candles. He was a man of deep repentance and tears. He emanated a preternatural light, a sign of his sanctity. One day, some pilgrims visited the monastery of The Holy Trinity in Hebron. Fr Ignaty welcomed them warmly and always

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treated them to a lavish meal. But when they were gone, Fr Ignaty knew that somebody had stolen something from the Monastery. It was a pilgrim of our group. The next morning Fr Ignaty arrived at the Hotel where we were staying but before he started searching for the robber, whom he knew all along, the guilty fellow rushed to return it. He was obviously lacrymose and deeple contrite. He had not slept all night. He was seized by demons and was foaming. Father Ignaty forgave him and the robber was restored to his former self.

Another wonderful testimony

Hi Sofia,

As I was getting ready for Church this morning at 8am, I returned a phone call from my dear friend Olga. I find out that she knew Hegumen Ignaty & wrote a few letters to him. He had such insight & knew her future & gave her advice on her pcoming marriage. She has lost those letters. She can tell you her story. And before the 2007, ROCOR Union with the MP, she went to visit his grave.

She also is going to give me a tel no for a carer who looks after a priest who knew him very, very well & might have photos. His matushka made things for him.

How interesting that it's all coming out now.

Nonna

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The veneration of Abraham's oak

The glorious place where the Lord appeared to Abraham at the oak grove of Mamre (Gen. 18: 1) has been surrounded by religious veneration since ancient times, but the honor given to "the tree of Abraham" was over time darkened by idolatry opposed by the prophets. The pious King Josiah of the Jews, destroying heights with altars and idols and cutting down sacred groves, may have cut down the sacred oak forest as a place of worship for pagan cults (2 Chronicles 34: 7), but the veneration of Abraham's oak did not stop. Herod the Great surrounded with a stone wall and reinforced with flooring the place revered in his time as the sacred grove of Abraham, but, according to the testimony of archaeologists, the construction was not completed by him. Ruins dating back to the time of the Maccabees were later discovered under this deck. On these ruins under the emperor Hadrian in the II century. a pagan temple with an altar and several other buildings was built. Next to these buildings was one of the largest markets in Syria and Palestine, where, after the Bar Kokhba uprising (132-135), by order of the Emperor Hadrian, thousands of captive Jews (men, women and children) were driven into slavery for sale. Despite the fact that this place was desecrated by idolatry, Jews, Christians and pagans visited it. Eutropia, mother- in-law of the emperor Constantine, also made a pilgrimage here, and, alarmed by the pagan desecration of the holy place, she told the em-

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peror Constantine about it. In the IV century. Holy Empress Helena built a magnificent basilica in honor of the Holy Trinity on the site of the buildings erected by Hadrian. The historian Eusebius quotes a message from Emperor Constantine to Bishop Macarius: “We know that the place near the Mamre oak, where Abraham lived, is darkened by idolatry, and for this I commanded ... without delay to set the idols on fire and overthrow their altars. And in order to further protect this place from mockery, we have identified and commanded to decorate it with a great temple. “

A piece from the Oak

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Note from the Author

I didn't know about Ivan. I had never thought about delving into the past of Russian Monasticism nor had I ever visited any Russian monasteries in the Holy Land except the imposing Monastery of Saint Mary the Magdalene the Myrrh-bearer, on the slope of the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane which is one of the most easily recognizable landmarks of Jerusalem. This striking example of Russian architecture was built in the Muscovite style with golden onion domes or cupolas. But Hebron was always a no-go area despite having been to the Holy Land 30 times before. So, how did I learn about Ivan? What prompted me to write a book on his life and try to trace his life? Of all people a Greek like me would be the least expected person to grapple with this onerous task as I don't know Russian, never have been to Hebron and knew nothing about how to embark on this quest. However, a photo of him on facebook by a complete unknown to me triggered the urge to find out more about him. I contacted the lady who posted the photo and took her an interview. What I discovered was the tailgate to a more thorough quest that would lead me to my sources. A spate of miraculous happenings started unfolding, prompting me to forge ahead and continue undaunted. The most astonishing of them was the tangible presence of the Hegoumen as I made a dent into this project. My first book on the Miracles in the Holy Land, entitled "Mys-

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tical Experiences in the Holy Land" by Promachos of Orthodoxy was like a crampon, a foothold that would enable a more serious engagement with my research. All of a sudden, testimonies started pouring in, people, having read my book, started calling me to give me information about the unknown saint of Hebron who fought with demons, conversed with the Holy Trinity and so many other staggering incidents that really spearheaded me to take a bit between my teeth. The icon that Mrs Sophia Kouna has in her iconostasis keeps falling and as she has admitted a light breeze caressed her cheeks upon entering her house with the book and the photo of Father Ignaty hasn't stopped falling ever since. I tried to contact the only relative alive, his niece, Irina Raksha. An 80-somethingyear old author who has been trying to trace her lineage. I sent her an email in English but she requested that I wrote in Russian. Google translate did the trick and now the language barrier was lifted. She told me how happy she was that somebody had decided to write about her uncle. The email exchanges are contained at the back of the book as well as her interviews to various literary journals where she recounts her lineage and the fortuitous encounter with her uncle posthumously. I have a feeling the readers of this book will get some valuable insights into the life of this Russian ascetic figure who loved The Most Holy Theotokos so very much and venerated the Holy Trinity there in Palestine, near the Mamre oak. If this is anything to go by, splinters o that Oak have come into

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my hands quite unexpectedly only recently. Who knows, maybe Father Ignaty wanted me to continue my search and publish a book on his life despite the missing pieces of this jigsaw puzzle which I have been endevoring to complete. I hope you will find his athletic struggles intriguing and inspirational as much as I have. May he bless us all from above

Amen.

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The Mamre oak

The leaves of the Oak of Mamre which miraculously came into my possession

According to legend, the Mamre oak is the last tree of the extinct oak forest of Mamre and the oldest witness of the glory of the Epiphany to Abraham on the biblical land. This oak is sung in sacred church canons and hymns, in poetry and prose, imprinted on thousands of ancient icons, engravings and drawings. Its dried branches were used to paint icons of the Holy Trinity and were sent to all corners of Tsarist Russia. The pilgrims who visited the oak collected acorns and pieces of bark, cut twigs for memory, carved sticks for staves, and pieces of wood were kept as sacred relics. From the ink nuts (galls) of the Mamvri Oak they made black paint, which was used exclusively for writing the names of God and sacred texts.

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The Mamvri Oak - in Arabic “Sindian” (Latin Quercus calliprinos) - belongs to a special Palestinian breed. Its leaves are very small, hard, oblong, with sawtooth geometry at the edges. The stone Palestinian oak is evergreen. Acorns with hard shells are the same as those of European oaks. The word “oak” in the Synodal Bible translates several different Hebrew words. The word “allon” felon), by which the Bashan tree is named, denotes the oak itself (Is. 2:13; Ezek. 27: 6; Zech. 11: 2). In Is.6: 13 and Hos.4: 13, along with the word ‘elon’, the word ‘elah (plural of’ elot ‘) is used, translated in the named places as terebinth, and in many other places as “oak”. Also, Josephus Flavius in the “Antiquities of the Jews” calls it an oak (1, 186), and in the “Jewish War” - terevinth (IV, 533).

The Holy Scriptures do not speak of any particular oak tree, but evidence of it appears already in the 1st century. According to R.H. Josephus Flavius, it is called Ogyges (Greek “ancient”, “venerable”) and believes that the oak stands here from the creation of the world. The historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 263-340) also mentions it, and according to the testimony of Blessed Jerome (342-420) this oak was cut down, and he saw only its stump. Interesting details about the veneration of the oak are reported by the early Christian historian Sozomen (c. 400-450): “The natives and the most distant inhabitants of Palestine, Phoenicians, Arabians, and now, during the summer, annually celebrate there a solemn holiday. By that time, many were going there for

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trade - to sell and buy. This holiday is respected by everyone: both by the Jews, because they are proud of the patriarch Abraham (as their ancestor), and by the pagans, because in that place there was the appearance of angels, and by Christians, because here the righteous one appeared here, Who later came to earth for salvation of humanity, born of the Virgin. " Since the 12th century, pilgrims, and in particular the Russian hegumen Daniel, describe the sacred oak of Abraham as follows: "There is that oak near the path, walking there on the right hand; and stands red on the mountain in the high ... And that there was the tent of Abraham near that oak to the east face. And there is that oak that is not velmi, tall, crooked (that is, sprawling) and often with branches and fruit there is a lot on it. And, in the travel notes of the famous Russian traveler and ethnographer A.V. Eliseev, who visited the Holy Land in the spring of 1884, he wrote: "Old, very old, this Patriarch of the disappeared forests of Palestine ...". In the XIX century. The Mamvri oak was still a mighty green tree. Its age was evidenced by both the impressive girth of the trunk and the height. This oak was undoubtedly the oldest of all Palestinian trees. Its main trunk had a circumference of 7 m near the ground. Then, the trunk was divided into three massive branches, as if symbolizing or reminding that under its stately shade it once gave shelter from the midday heat to three Angels, who were hospitably met here by Abraham. His crown hugged a space of about 95 steps in a circle and gave a very

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thick shadow. Soon after the acquisition of the site by the Russian Mission, the oak began to dry out. One of its branches, withered and broken by the storm, was kept in the Mission in the form of sawn boards, on which icons of the Holy Trinity were written to bless the worshipers. Father Antonin then wrote with bitterness in his notes, that “several decades of intensive Russian pilgrimage damaged the oak more than centuries of infidel rule.” Over time, at a distance of several meters from the memorial oak of the giant, two more greening ones have grown and in our time, which today are about two hundred years old. Even prerevolutionary pilgrims gave their names to the oaks in the fence: one was called the oak of Sarah, the other - the oak of Isaac, implying that the age-old giant symbolizes Abraham himself. . In our time, the giant tree of Abraham is sometimes called in Palestine simply “Russian oak”. The last green oak branch withered in April 1996, even before the transfer of the site to the Moscow Patriarchate. Currently, it is supported from decay by metal supports. In the Holy Land, it was believed that the complete wilting of Abraham’s oak was associated with the end of the earthly world. However, when in 2000 the entire Christian world celebrated the great anniversary of the 2000th anniversary of the Nativity of Christ, to the great surprise of all the oak tree suddenly “came to life.” A young green root shoot appeared near the dried trunk, and next to it another small one. One of them is the root shoots of a dried ancient giant oak, the second

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has grown from an acorn. The newly appeared oak trees seemed to “come to life”, like the once dried womb of the foremother Sarah, because for God nothing is impossible. It is noteworthy that the trunk of the new oak, as the great symbol of the Holy Trinity, also divides into three main branches, repeating the silhouette of the old man’s oak. A young oak tree now reaches a height of more than 1.5 m, another is slightly smaller. Both oak trees grow rapidly upward, delighting the eyes of pilgrims. A plot of land with an ancient oak tree revered by pilgrims and local residents was acquired in 1868 as the property of the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem. Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin) believed that if this is not even the same oak of Patriarch Abraham, then, undoubtedly, a descendant of the ancient Palestinian giants and a great symbol of the Epiphany to Patriarch Abraham. The acquisition of this site was fraught with great difficulties. First, the government of the Ottoman Empire, which included Palestine, prohibited the sale of land to representatives of foreign powers. A land plot in Hebron with an oak of Mamvri for many years belonged to a certain Ibrahim Shalludi, who inherited it from his father Osman, and brought considerable income to its owner, who sold to visiting tourists branches, twigs and leaves from the sacred tree. Soon after the sale of the site, he was killed by fellow believers. A special role in the acquisition of the Mamvri oak was played by the dragoman of the Russian consulate, Yakov Yegorovich Khalebi (Arabic: Yakub ibn Jirdis al-Khale-

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bi). The difficulty was that the oak was at that time in an area where especially fanatical Muslims lived. Aleppo, an Arab by birth, was able, without exaggeration, to make the purchase of a precious tree in his own name at the risk of his life. Returning to the Mission, he happily ran up the stairs and, waving his “Kushan” (deed of purchase), solemnly announced: “Oak is Russian!” Over the next years, Father Antonin managed to acquire, albeit with considerable difficulty, several more adjacent plots adjacent to the first, with a total area of 72,400 sq. meters. Thus, on May 22, 1871, under the shade of an oak tree, the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated, after which an unbroken stream of pilgrims headed here. Over time, an iron canopy was erected over the witness of the glory of the patriarch Abraham, and the base of the trunk was surrounded by a special stone foundation, on which divine services were performed. Later, on this vast area, Archimandrite Antonin built a stone two-story house for pilgrims, a watchtower and two rainwater cisterns. The feast of the Holy Trinity was held here especially solemnly. A large number of fans gathered for this day. The main caravan leaving Jerusalem consisted of about three hundred Russian pilgrims. At dawn, at about five o’clock in the morning, under an oak tree on a stone throne with a portable antimension, a cathedral headed by Father Antonin celebrated the Divine Liturgy. A small table placed next to it served as an altar. Vigil on the eve was also celebrated under an oak tree. The clergy, singers and honorary

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pilgrims stood within the fence, while the pilgrims surrounded the lattice encircling the sacred oak in a tight ring. Wonderful, touching chants in honor of the Trinity Deity echoed through the desolate surroundings of Hebron. The festive celebrations ended with tea and a light breakfast for guests of honor on the second floor of the shelter, and ordinary pilgrims were offered tea with bread and hot soup with a glass of wine from the Hebron vineyards. Noble Muslims and Jews with their families also came from Hebron. Sitting on the lawns under the shade of branched sycamore trees, they enjoyed the clean mountain air, watching with curiosity the life of Russian pilgrims. When buying a site, the Turkish administration imposed a categorical ban on the construction of a church or monastery here. Nevertheless, in 1884, when the Mamre shrine was visited by two patriarchs, Nicodemus of Jerusalem and Joachim III of Constantinople, they “blessed a temple of God in this place.” Following this, in all parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church, a collection of donations was organized for the construction of a temple in Hebron. However, the greatest blessing due to the difficult situation in the city, where mainly fanatical Muslims lived, was fulfilled only in 1904 by the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, Archimandrite Leonid (Sentsov). From 1906 to 1914 there was a difficult process of obtaining a Turkish firmman for the construction and consecration of the temple. The construction was started in 1906 by the Italian architect G. Bergamasco,

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but was interrupted by the First World War and ended only in 1925. The temple was built of local white hewn stone and consecrated in the name of the Holy Forefathers by Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem, co-served by the Russian Archbishop Anastasius (Gribanovsky), and the side chapels: the right one - in the name of the Most Holy Trinity and the left one - in the name of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, since the deal to buy the Hebron plot took place on the day of memory of this great Saint. The church vestments were donated to the temple personally by the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna. The Grand Duchess also presented the temple with two crystal chandeliers, which hang in it to this day.

After the October Revolution, the entire site passed into the possession of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and in 1997, by the decision of the Palestinian Authority Administration with the participation of Yasser Arafat, on June 5, 1997, the monastery was transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. Immediately, repair and restoration work was carried out, the two-storey cell building, the temple itself, were completely repaired, a fence around the site was strengthened. Before the First World War, the entire site surrounding the temple was buried in the greenery of olive, almond and fig trees and was surrounded on all sides by continuous vineyards. Later, most of the trees died due to lack of care. In our time, through the efforts of Hieromonk Alexy (Eliseev),

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the former clerk, clerk of the courtyard (now Bishop of Galich and Makaryevsky), work began on the site to create a botanical garden of biblical plants, divided into several sectors. In total, it is planned to plant more than 120 names of biblical plants. In addition to the biblical oak, several ancient Hebrew tombs carved into the natural rock have survived on the territory of the courtyard, within the walls of which there are preserved niches for ossuaries in the form of “kokhim” (Hebrew Kokhim), with two ritual “stones of anointing”. These rather large tombs, which served to store the bodies and remains of the dead, allow us to imagine what the Holy Sepulcher looked like two thousand years ago. Near the burial chamber, you can still see a large processed stone, which was used to close the entrance to the coffin. At the most elevated place of the site, there is an observation tower, in which Father Antonin, who was fond of astronomy, as a great lover of the sky, set up a small astronomical observatory for himself. It is noteworthy that later, in his testamentary word, Father Antonin “the best item of my property, an astronomical telescope ...” decided to transfer the Kiev Theological Academy that raised him. Father Antonin, making his trips to the Holy Land, always carried the Gospel, a prayer book and a telescope with him in his bag for observing the stars. The observatory tower also served as an observation post for the inhabitants to determine the location of pilgrim caravans heading to Hebron.

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Hegumen Ignatius Raksha

On the site there is a small cemetery located behind the church of St. Forefathers, on which some outstanding figures of the Russian emigration are buried. Among them is a well-known and authoritative elder - hegumen Ignatius (Raksha). Hegumen Ignatius (in the world Ivan) was from the Crimea, served in the White Army, then in the rank of a junior officer he came to Germany, where he became a resident of the monastery of St. Job of Pochaev. From Germany in 1950 he moved to the Holy Land. From 1950 to 1960, Father Ignatius was obedient to the steward of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem under the jurisdiction of the ROCOR. Since 1964, Father Ignatius was in charge of the Russian section at the Mamre Oak and was the rector of the Church of the Holy Forefathers, where for many years in the post-war period he served practically alone. The elder devoted almost the whole day to prayer, his name-bearing consisted of 25,000 names, which he remembered at each Liturgy, and the proskomidia lasted for several hours. People from the Russian diaspora who knew the elder say that shortly before his righteous death, he was honored with the vision of “Three Mysterious Wanderers.” Many people came to him for spiritual advice and prayer support, including the nuns of the Gornensky monastery in Jerusalem, all of whom the elder received with love. Father Ignatius reposed in the Lord in 1986. To this day, the flow of

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pilgrims to Hebron, who wish to touch here the living pages of the ancient biblical history and bow to the witness of Abraham's hospitality as a symbol of great, active love for God and neighbor, continues to this day. Many people came to him for spiritual advice and prayer support, including the nuns of the Gornensky monastery in Jerusalem; the elder received all of them with love. Father Ignatius reposed in the Lord in 1986. To this day, the flow of pilgrims to Hebron, who want to touch here the living pages of the ancient biblical history and worship the witness of Abraham's hospitality as a symbol of great, active love for God and neighbor, continues to this day. Many people came to him for spiritual advice and prayer support, including the nuns of the Gornensky monastery in Jerusalem; the elder received all of them with love. Father Ignatius reposed in the Lord in 1986. To this day, the flow of pilgrims to Hebron, who want to touch here the living pages of the ancient biblical history and worship the witness of Abraham's hospitality as a symbol of great, active love for God and neighbor, continues to this day.

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"The earth is on fire, the earth is burning, cannot you see?"

Hegumen Ignatius (Raksha† 1986), the elder Ignatius, who served in Mamvrian oak in Hebron, is a Russian, originally from the Crimea, was captured during the war, ended up in Germany, then in the Holy Land. Hegumen Ignatius worked in the Trinity Cathedral together with the monk George, except for them in the church there were no ministers. The elders did not miss a single night without a prayer before the Lord – they had whole night liturgies, matins, Divine Liturgy, and worked during the day. The elder was the keeper of the holy oak, near which Patriarch Abraham provided hospitality to the three Angels. As soon as bugs, worms started, he immediately called for special doctors. When Abbot Ignatius appeared before the Lord in the Hebron temple, one branch of an ancient oak tree was still green. Once at noon, when Ignatius stood on the balcony, the Most Holy Trinity appeared to him, like the Forefathers, in the form of three wanderers. Since then, at 13 o'clock in the afternoon strange flowers appear at this place every day, tender, blue – for a short time, for about ten minutes, then disappear, as if they were not there. No one is able to either pick a flower or dry it. Elder Ignatius had eyesight above natural. He was often beaten by demons. Abbess Theodora personally was a witness: they are sit-

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ting, talking in a calm atmosphere, the old man will leave for a moment, and he will return full of blood. “What’s wrong with you, father ?!” “Nothing, nothing, thank God for everything,” the old man will meekly smile, and they continue the conversation. Once, an old man told mother Theodore: “In Holy Russia there will still be the Anointed of God,” and he burst into tears.Another time, he pointed with his hand from the balcony: “The earth is on fire, the earth is burning, can not you see?” “No,” mother admitted honestly.“And I see, and I’m scared.Read the Gospel, Psalter!The end of the world is approaching, and people are still unrighteous and cruel, and they don’t hear that death is coming to them. And now – the last time the Lord punished people with water, and this time he will punish them with fire.

Monastery of St. Job of Pochaev (Munich)

Hieromonk Ignatius in Munich

On the northern outskirts of Munich, in the suburb of Obermenzing, the ancient royal hunting castle Blutenburg gleams with peaked roofs. An Orthodox monastery appeared in Bavaria during the Second World War. In 1944, military events forced the monks of the

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monastery of Job of Pochaevsky, organized in the Slovak village of Ladomirova by Russian emigrants, to leave Slovakia. Some of the brothers ended up in America, where they founded the famous Jordanville, and some settled near Munich. The two-story building, which the monks had inherited, was in a deplorable state, there was no furniture, except for two wooden benches.We slept on the floor.The first divine services were also held in ascetic conditions - the altar and the iconostasis were built from boards, censer and candlesticks were made from cans and pieces of aluminum left over from crashed planes in the surrounding fields. Gradually the monks began to settle down. On a small plot of land, they set up a garden, planted fruit trees, and set up hives.Now the garden has grown so much that you cannot immediately see the small monastery building behind the lush crowns.You won't see any luxury here, but it's hard not to notice with what love the house church of Job of Pochaev is arranged on the first floor of the only monastery building.The interior is divided into two parts by a series of arches, the walls are painted with floral patterns in gentle pastel colors.As a rule, electric lighting is not used here during services - only candles and lamps, this creates a special atmosphere. In addition to the temple, the monastery library is located on the ground floor.There are also the modest chambers of Vladyka Mark, Archbishop of Berlin and Germany - the abbot of the monastery. The basement is set aside for a printing house and a book warehouse. Book

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publishing is a tradition that has survived from the Slovak period of monastic history and is supported in Munich and Jordanville. Monastic cells are in the attic, under the very roof.Nowadays only ten inhabitants live in the monastery. Below, Hieromonk Ignatius in Pochaev, the fourth in the first row. In the photo, Father Ignatius standing above the kid to the right.

The Certificate and the email Irina Raksha, his niece, has sent me.

Dear Sofia,

Thank you. I am sending you the most important document: the Certificate stating that Abbot Ignatius, a former hieromonk in the Convent of St. Job in Munich, goes from Germany to Palestine, where he was later hegumen Ignatius, the builder of the temple of Abraham and Sarah until 1986. I have the original. Here is its text and scanned image.

This is for you, Sophia, for further work on the book about his holy memory.

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DIE DIOZESANVERWALTUNG
DER ORTHODOXEN KIRCHE
IN DEUTSCHLAND
(Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts)
den 26 Сентября 1951 г.
Nr. 1076
MÜNCHEN
Mauerkircherstraße 5

У Д О С Т О В Ѣ Р Е Н І Е.

Дано сіе Іеромонаху И Г Н А Т І Ю (Ракша) въ томъ, что онъ состоялъ въ числѣ братіи Ставропигіальной обители Преподобнаго Іова Почаевскаго въ гор. Мюнхенѣ.

За время пребыванія своего въ предѣлахъ Православной Епархіи въ Германіи о. Игнатій подъ судомъ, слѣдствіемъ, судомъ и запрещеніемъ не состоялъ и не состоитъ. Предѣлы Германской Епархіи оставляетъ за выѣздомъ въ Палестину.

Изъ наградъ имѣетъ набедренникъ, коимъ награжденъ Предсѣдателемъ Архіерейскаго Синода Заграницей Высокопреосвященнѣйшимъ Митрополитомъ Анастасіемъ.

Временно Управляющій Епархіей
Епископъ Киссингенскій Александръ

Секретарь Епархіальнаго Управленія Е. Захаробенко

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He leads part of the inhabitants to the Holy Land

In 1944, the Red Army approached eastern Slovakia and the brethren of the monastery of St. Job of Pochavsky in Ladomirova, headed by Archimandrite Seraphim (Ivanov) , who were anti-Soviet, were forced to move first to Bratislava , and then to Germany and Switzerland , where they waited for permission to enter the United States. By the end of 1945, Abbot Job (Leontyev), who had not received permission to move to the United States due to illness, organized a monastic community in the basement of the Synodal House of the ROCOR Synod in Munichin the Bogenhausen area. The date of birth of the monastic brotherhood in the name of St. Job of Pochaev in Munich is called December 29, 1945. The new monastic community was organized according to the charter of the former monastery, which, in turn, borrowed from the Pochaev Lavra. In addition to hegumen Job, the confessor of the brethren, hieromonk Nikodim (Nagaev) and 4 novices entered the new community. The iconostasis in the Old Russian style was painted in 1944-1946 by hieromonk Kiprian (Pyzhov). In early 1946, a dilapidated two-story building of the former Hitler Youth School (1939) near the Blutenburg castle was purchased for the Munich monks . The magazine Pravoslavnaya Rus ‘ for 1947 cites the following testimony: “When we moved in, in the whole house we found only two wide benches from the shower

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locker room. For a long time these benches served as beds for two brothers - the rest slept on the floor ... The wooden beds were given to us by our acquaintances by American institutions, but they have not yet bought cabinets - there is nowhere to get them ". On March 4, 1946, the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR decided: "1. Allow the main body of the brotherhood of St. Job, headed by the rector Archimandrite. Seraphim to leave for America to join the Holy Trinity Monastery and work together with the local population; 2. To form in Europe two metochions of the brotherhood - a

The first Synod in Germany, where the Russians had fled at the Monastery of Saint Job of Potsaev. In the photo, Saint John Maximovitch and Father Ignaty Raksha can be easily recognized

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temporary one in Geneva and a permanent one in Munich, so that this part of the brotherhood would serve as the nucleus for the formation of monasteries in Europe; keep both farmsteads under the direct subordination of the Synod as stavropegia ; to appoint Abbot Job (Leontyev) as the abbot of the courtyard in Germany and elevate him to the rank of archimandrite ". In late 1946 - early 1947, most of the former inhabitants of the monastery of St. Job of Pochaev in Ladomirova emigrated from Switzerland to the United States, where they joined the brethren of Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville. Through the efforts of monks and laborers from the parishioners of Munich parishes, the building was partially rebuilt and adapted for monastic life. The former pool housed a candle shop, and next to it the monks installed a printing press. The house church was equipped: " From the Synod they brought images, fortified on a board, in the form of a goddess ... and a lectern made then by Fr. Gelasius. They set them up and prayed in front of them. The brothers with prayer built a throne, an altar and a light iconostasis from the forest they received ... There was a feast of App. Peter and Paul [that is, July 12 in the new style], and on this day the first liturgy was served at the monastery ". On August 28, 1946, Metropolitan Anastassy (Gribanovsky) consecrated a church in the name of the Monk Job of Pochaev , " moreover, the icons brought from Switzerland and made by hier. Cyprian (Pyzhov) ... and erected on a temporary iconostasis ... The decoration of the church, such as: chandeliers , banners , two candlesticks, part of the images,

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analogies were donated by prisoners of war of the Plattling camp, who made them from improvised material: tin cans, aluminum from crashed aircraft, etc. . ” In 1947, three have been installed in the monastery church shrine Venerable Job of Pochaev , to St. Nicholas Chutovortsu and to St. Theodosius of Chernigov . Artists K. I. Gusev, L. A. Jordan, M. A. Yanson decorated the walls of the temple with ornaments and images of saints .In the late 1940s, Archimandrite Job opened two more monasteries monastery: in Nice (France) under the leadership of hieromonk Theodosius (Trushevicha) and in Germany in a separate housing, home church and a printing press at the parish of St. Procopius of Ustyug in Hamburg at the beginning of Archimandrite Vitaly (Ustinov) . The most active was the Hamburg courtyard, at which in 1945-1948 the printing house of the Monk Job of Pochaev, which was transferred in 1948 to the Fishbeck Russian refugee camp, operated . In 1950, Bishop Nathanael initiated the opening of two more monasteries in France. The first was opened near Ozouire-la-Ferrierehegumen Nikodim (Nagaev), the second in southern France, in the city of Po , where the Aleksanro-Nevskaya church existed since 1867 ; hieromonk Panteleimon (Rogov) became responsible for its creation . In addition to them, 4 more monks were seconded from Munich to organize farmsteads. However, these farmsteads were soon closed, and the only successor to the Ladomirov monastery in Europe was the monastery in Munich.

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He departs to the Holy Land

In 1947, 32 people lived in the monastery, in 1948 - 46 people. Then the number of inhabitants began to decrease, as they left for the USA and Switzerland. In 1951, part of the inhabitants, led by **Hieromonk Ignatius (Raksha)**, moved to the Holy Land . Living in West Germany, near the borders of the socialist camp, seemed unsafe. By the end of 1954, 25 people remained in the monastery, including several Germans. Where Abbot Ignatius was buried, who served here for more than 30 years on the Compound and monk George.

Tracing the lineage of Ivan through Irina, his niece

Father-Yevgeny Igorevich Raksha lived his childhood in a village near Kiev, in a bleached Hut, among cherry orchards. Igor Raksha was a local" pedinovskiy "paramedic (or rather Igor, almost Yegor), a black- eyed, short and dark-haired plume"from Zaporizhzhya Sich". In Pedinovka, the family of a reliable winger was respected, even loved, and for short stature, he was nicknamed not without love - "Malyuki". And all the children (except the blue-eyed, blonde Zhenya) were dark and brown-eyed. The hostess in a large hut was a lame, but hand- made, very economical singer Maria Vasilyevna Vinninova (from Kurya, "from katsap", sister

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of Nadezhda Plevitskaya). This peculiar surname " Raksha "(with emphasis on The Last" a") is considered Ukrainian. There is half the village of Raksha. There are Rakshas in the Crimea, also a branch of blood. Ivan Raksha (1906-1986), an immigrant who received a monastery near Munich and received the name Ignatius, was sent from the Diocese of foreign Orthodox churches in Palestine to Hebron, to the Oak of Mamvriy in Palestine in 1938. Soon he became Abbot in the monastery (there were 14 monks). Amidst the mismanagement of Russian lands in Palestine, he built near the eternal Oak (from savings, pennies, he collected from pilgrims around the world) - a church in the name of the Holy ancestors Abraham and Sarah, who once met three Wanderers under the same oak - the Holy Trinity. This Abbot Ignatius (Ivan Raksha), having revealed a miracle, brought me "by accident" last year, literally by the ear, to his grave. And during the first (!) pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Perhaps of all the Raksha he chose me as the most ecclesiastical. Only God knows. But I didn't know where he slept, how he lived. Only the fathers remembered the words that " Ivan has completely moved us. Somewhere he disappeared as a monk in Germany." (So in question marks, there are relatives abroad, my dad, a member of the Communist Party, oh - how, there was something to hide!) Yet this extraordinary story is a distinct, distinct plot. And if it comes to Raksha, then I drove somehow near Kiev, to Pedinovka to my aunt - Nadezhda Raksha (called Nadezhda Plevitskaya),

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the younger sister of my father, who had lived all her life in her maternal, family home. And I went with her, unexpectedly, to a local wedding to some distant relatives. The festive tables in the green garden and in the courtyard of the bleached hut were overflowing with dishes. Noise, laughter, beautiful young people, songs under the cymbal, gifts with pride of event, parade under Apple. What was not there! All for a youthful, good life: lace embroidery, embroidered linen with a Hemisphere, fork spoons, buckets, dishes, embroidered with red Crows and roses. (And my vase in Moscow is right there, it was useful). But the main gift was furniture. and of course, a springcovered sofa, with red upholstery, on which no one naturally sat. It was bought chips, the whole world " of the world.

Hebron - Temple of the Holy Forefathers

The territory of the courtyard is 7 hectares, there are gardens all around (there is even a "garden of 35 biblical herbs"), cleanliness and order. We were amazed to learn that there are only six novices here, all of them come from Balaam. First of all, we were taken to the church of the Holy Forefathers, and then to the Mamre oak, the 6000-year-old witness of the Holy Trinity.

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The Miracle-working icon of The Sign
that Abbot Ignaty wore around his neck.

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Mambrian Oak - Russian

The Mamre Oak is located a little off the road from Jerusalem to Hebron. Hebron is the city where the Mamre oak is located, where the Three Angels appeared to Abraham. Near the oak forest of Mamre In the 19th century, pilgrims, turning from it, walked here along a narrow path covered with small stones. This path passed through the vegetable gardens and orchards of local Arab residents and led tired travelers to a vast tract of Russian land. The site where the Mamvri oak is located was bought in 1808 by Father Antonin and is the organizer of Russian Palestine, head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin), with the support of the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, Count II. Ignatieva, managed to overcome

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the resistance of the local Muslim authorities, the Turkish government, neutralize the intrigues of the Catholics and the confrontation of European diplomacy. The Mamre oak in Hebron was one of the first Russian possessions in Palestine, but the acquisition of the Mamre oak was a turning point in the establishment of the Russian spiritual presence in the Holy Land.

Acquisition of Abraham's oak by the Russian Orthodox Church

Hebron Muslims did not want to hear about the sale of their land to Christians in such an important place for them. The sale of the bark, acorns and wood of the famous tree brought a considerable income to its owner, and according to Turkish law, only a subject of the Sultan could own land in the empire. Fr. Antonin played a prank on the intractable owners of the shrine. His friend and assistant, an Ottoman citizen of the Orthodox faith, Yakub Halebi, disguised as an Arab merchant, went to Hebron. It took a long time before he had the right moment to conclude a deal to buy the right land. It took a lot of money and remarkable ability to persuade and persuade. In the end, Yakub Halebi issued a deed of sale for a plot with a sacred tree and returned to Jerusalem happy. However, several more years of heavy diplomatic struggle passed before Count N.P. Ignatiev managed to

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get official permission from the Turkish authorities to complete this deal. The first liturgy was served under the Mamvri oak by the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Anthony, on May 18, 1871. The Mamri oak is 5,000 years old. It was believed that when this sacred oak dries up, the world will end. Several years ago, the Mamri oak really withered, but gave young shoots from the root. Both in former times and now, when some branch of an oak tree died, crucifixes were carved from it, which then spread from the Holy Land all over the world.

Источник:https://beremennoch.ru/svyataya-zemlya-chast-1- xevron-mamvrijskij-dub.html#i-18

Father Antonin's works

Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin), a prominent scientist and theologian, was appointed the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in the Holy Land. The priest found himself in a situation where the higher authorities, namely the Synod and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire, could not find a common language, which was reflected in the financial situation of the Mission. Relations with the Jerusalem Patriarch and representatives of other confessions of the Holy Land were also not easy during the period. Archimandrite Antonin, avoiding any politics, devoted himself to the study of the Palestinian lands, looking

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for parallels in the biblical texts with the modern geography of the territory. As a result of painstaking work, the priest, communicating with the local population, established that the Hebron tract of Khir-bet-en-zibta was the very oak forest of Mamre. The Abrahamic oak was revered among the inhabitants of Palestine and did not hesitate to call them "sacred." Father Antonin decided to buy out the land with the tree, and then 12 plots, which formed the territorial basis of the Russian mission in the Holy Land. Old postcard depicting the Mamvri oak, 1890 In the 70s of the XX century, to strengthen the stability of the Mamvri oak, work was carried out to install concrete rings. But human intervention launched an irreversible process of withering away of the roots of the tree, and the trunk completely dried out. In 1997, a young shoot began to grow from a dying oak tree. Mamvri oak a few years ago Since 2016, work began on the conservation of the tree, props were installed, as it could fall. But on February 9, 2019, the dry oak collapsed. This caused a real panic among Christians around the world, which was especially noticeable on the Internet. Warming up hysteria, some resources wrote about the legend, according to which, the fall of the Mamre oak indicates the approach of the end of the world.

Opinion from the Holy Land Hegumen Nikon (Golovko) We decided to find out to what extent the Christians' concern was justified and contacted the secretary of the Rus-

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sian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem, Abbot Nikon (Golovko). - Father Nikon, what is this legend that says that the fall of the oak will occur shortly before the end of the world? - The fact is that this is one of the oral legends, but nowhere in the books that deserve attention, have we met this legend.

Источник:https://beremennoch.ru/svyataya-zemlya-chast-1- xevron-mamvrijskij-dub.html#i-18

Hebron and the Holy Seer

There are many miraculous icons in the temple. On the analogue there is an icon from the cut of the Mamre oak, painted for the opening of the temple in 1925. Father Parthenius showed the Icon of the Sign, which had previously belonged to the local elder Ignatius, who even on Athos was revered as a saint during his lifetime. The elder always wore this icon on his chest. Father Parthenius with the miraculous icon of Elder Ignatius, who had the gift of foresight (Photo by A. Yaremchuk) “Hegumen Ignatius took care of the vineyard, baked prosphora himself and served the liturgy every day (from 2 am to 11 am),” says Father Parthenius. - And he had so many notes that he spent the prayer service almost all day. He had the gift of clairvoyance. There are about 200 icon lamps here, and before each he bowed down. He met all the pilgrims with the words “Christ is Risen” and gave them tea. The locals loved our priest very

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much, especially after in one of the conflicts between Arabs and Israelis, Arabs ran to the gate of the temple and asked for asylum. Father Ignatius let them in, and he himself stood in the doorway with the icon. The Israelis even tried to shoot, but not a single bullet miraculously hit, they bounced off, so they left with nothing. After this miracle, the image began to be considered miraculous. “

Источник:https://beremennoch.ru/svyataya-zemlya-chast-1- xevron-mamvrijskij-dub.html#i-25
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The tombs of father Ignatius and Father George

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What Vladimir Moss says about Fr Ignaty in his book

"The battle for the Russian Orthodox Church"

In the 1970s, the superior of the Hebron monastery, IgumenIgnaty, neither allowed members of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territory of the monastery (he drove them away with a stick!) nor commemorated the Patriarch of Jerusalem (although he had friendly relations with some members of that patriarchate). A former member of the Catacomb Church and a close friend of St. John Maximovich, Fr.Ignaty had the gifts of tears and prophecy and was revered as a saint even by the Muslims. He feared God alone, and therefore even the enemies of the faith, sensing his spiritual power, sought to kiss the hem of his garment as he walked the streets of Jerusalem. His example shows how ROCOR could have acted, relying on the power of faith alone.His example shows how ROCOR could have acted, relying on the power of faith aloneAnd even after Fr.Ignaty's repose in 1986, there continued to be ROCOR clergy in Jerusalem who followed his example. Thus a close friend of Fr.Ignaty's, Archimandrite Nektary (Chernobyl), who had been a member of the Catacomb Church in Russia and died in 2000, "never communed with clergy of jurisdictions entering into the ecumenical World Council of Churches. He

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openly reproached representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate who had betrayed Holy Orthodoxy The first Synod in Germany, where the Russians had fled at the Monastery of Saint Job of Potsaev. In the photo, Saint John Maximovitch and Father Ignaty Raksha can be easily recognized.

"For the Sacrament, the father was given potatoes and bread"

Irina Raksha, the widow of the famous artist Yuri Raksha, and niece of Hegumen Ignatius Raksha posed for many of his paintings. But she herself is a creative person: the author of 30 prose books, a film playwright, winner of the Shukshin and Esenin Prizes. We asked her to share her "church" memories.

"Secret baptism in besieged Moscow" Accounts of Irina Raksha

They baptized me, says Irina Raksha, at the very beginning of World War II, when I was three years old. We still lived in Moscow, although many then left for evacuation. It was cold and hungry. The Germans endlessly bombed our barracks on 3rd Ostankino street. One evening a strange man came to us in a quilted jacket. On legs of a terrible kind of boots with galoshes screwed with wire. The man

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walked down the hall of the hut and turned into the kitchen, where, apparently, the mistresses were whispering before him. Having removed the padded jacket, he dismissed his vestments, and we saw that this was a priest. He said he came to baptize the kids. Women quickly put water on the primus stoves, brought a bath and began to bring their children. Even our Tatar neighbor, while her husband was not at home, came with her sons Said and Murshid, although she herself was a Muslim. My mother took out the cross that her grandmother gave her, and also came with me to our shared kitchen. Then the father dubbed nearly a dozen kids. In gratitude, the women gave him potatoes and a piece of bread. My dad found out about baptism later and made a scandal for mom. After all, they could have kicked him out of work for such things. And he was the chief - the director of the Cotton pavilion at VDNH.

Irina remembers how the unemployed did the headman

The beginning of the 1990s turned out to be difficult for me: they did not publish, they did not pay fees. For several years I even had to tax on a personal “Zhiguli”. The business is dangerous: twice my competitors bombed me. With a heavy heart, I came to confession in the Church of the Annunciation in Petrovsky Park. And suddenly the abbot,

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father Dimitry Smirnov, asks: “Irina Evgenievna, would you not undertake to be a headman, to rebuild the church?” I agreed. It was a question of another church of the Annunciation - on Butyrskaya Street, it was abandoned, without domes, between the refectory and the bell tower - a large factory building. There were a lot of problems. It was with great difficulty that we defended the right to buildings and church land, to work in the archives with documents ... But somehow everything was gradually decided, adjusted. And it worked wonderfully with my work: unexpectedly they called from the magazine “Worker” and offered to head a department of culture and art there. Separately, I began to lead the “Blagovest” column.

Meeting with my uncle Ivan Raksha in the Holy Land Reminisces of his niece, Irina

As a child, from my father, I heard that in the Holy Land we have intercessors. What this means, I realized many years later when I went to Hebron, where there is a great shrine - the Mamvrian oak. It was under it that the biblical Abraham received three angels thousands of years ago - the type of the Trinity God. And now, along with other pilgrims, I go to the Cathedral of the Holy Forefathers, located near the shrine. At the entrance they sell books about the

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temple, I wanted to buy something. The monk behind the counter answers: “Yes, our abbot Ignatius Raksha built all this ...” I froze in surprise, goosebumps ran down my skin. At that moment, I remembered what my father was saying. The monk said that the abbot rested in 1986, handed me his photograph, which they managed to release for sale. His face looked exactly like my father’s I muttered: “It seems to me that this is my relative.” The monk looked at me in surprise and asked: “How? The abbot hasn’t left anywhere since the war. ” With trembling hands, I held out my documents and explained that my dad was a cousin of Ignatius’s father. That is, the builder of the cathedral in Hebron is my cousin uncle. I was escorted to the chapel, where the abbot was buried, and then we went into the cell to the old man George, who had served with father Ignatius all his life. Finding out who I was, the monk gray-haired monk said: “He waited so long for you, he knew you would be coming.” And he said how Father Ignatius guarded the Mamvrian oak and, stone by stone, erected the temple of Abraham and Sarah. built by Saint Helena. The underground church is dedicated to the Synaxis of the Mother of God, to Joseph the Betrothed and the Shepherds. Tradition has it that three of the shepherds to whom the angel announced the birth of Christ were buried in the west side of the Cave Church and their tomb and bones are still visible to this day. Today, only the crypt of the church remains. This dark subterranean chapel contains an altar facing eastward with a number of icons and a small

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apse behind it. The traditions also indicate that Saint Paula constructed a Church in the 5th century, but was destroyed by the Samaritans in the year 530 AD. Then the Emperor Justinian re-constructed the Church until it was destroyed by the Persians in the year 614 AD who killed all the monks that were there. Then the Emperor Hercules reconstructed it in the year 632 AD, but it was later destroyed again. During the Islamic ruling of the region (638 – 1099 AD), the monastery was rebuilt surrounded with high walls, to provide asylum and protection to the desert monks, and had a monastic brotherhood until the 11thcentury when the monastery was completely destroyed by the Crusaders, after which it was abandoned by the monks. The monastery was deserted and only the cave Church remained, under the care of the Fathers Forefathers Orthodox Church' congregation and priests at that time as a devotional area for Christians residents of the area and those pilgrims who visited the holy land, until the year 1971, when the Patriarch of Jerusalem at that time, at the initiative and instigation of the late Elder Seraphim the Sabbaitis (the first, after many years, Abbot and founder of the current Monastery of the Shepherds), decided to build a new large Church at the traditional site, adjacent to the cave, and finished in the year 1989 AD. The new Church was named "Glory to God in the Highest," and has three holy altars which are dedicated as follows: the main altar to the Mother of God, the altar on the right to the great martyr and healer – Saint Pantelei-

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mon, and the altar on the left side to the archangels Michael and Gabriel and all the heavily hosts. Over the centuries the Monastery of the shepherds has also been known as the “Tower of Gader”, “Property of Boaz”, “Property of King David”, “The land of Jacob and Rachael”, “Property of Joachim and Anne” and “The fields of Virgin Mary”.

Monk George (Krylosov) (George (Krylossov)) (1917 - ?) The fellow ascetic of Fr. Ignatius’s

Born in 1917 on the territory of the Russian Empire. In exile in the Holy Land (Israel, Palestine). In the 1950s mentioned in the brethren of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, as a resident of the Hebron Monastery in the Holy Land (Israel, Palestine) under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). He was the fellow ascetic of Hegumen Ignatius Raksha. He also testified to the death of Fr Ignatius from poisoning. He recalls: “It was not the first time, they had tried to kill him. His death is attributed to homicide with malice aforethought”.

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Everyone loved him

On the site there is a small cemetery located behind the temple of St. The forefathers, at which some prominent figures of the Russian emigration are buried. Among them, a well-known and respected elder - Father Superior Ignatius (Raksha). Hegumen Ignatius (Ivan in the world) was a native of the Crimea, he served in the White Army, then, in the rank of junior officer, he came to Germany, where he became the inhabitant of the Monastery of St. Job of Pochaev. From Germany in 1950 he moved to the Holy Land. From 1950 to 1960, Father Ignatius carried the obedience of the economist of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem in the jurisdiction of the ROCA. Since 1964, Father Ignatius was in charge of the Russian site under the Mamvrian Oak and was the rector of the church of Sts. The forefathers, where for many years in the postwar period he served practically alone. The elder devoted almost a whole day to prayer, his name consisted of 25,000 names that he remembered at each Liturgy, and proskomidia lasted several hours. People who knew the old man from the Russian Diaspora tell that shortly before his righteous death, he was honored with the vision of “Three Mysterious Wanderers”. A lot of people came to him for spiritual advice and prayer support, including nuns of the Gornensky monastery in Jerusalem, all of them were received with love by the elder. Father Ignatius rested on the Lord in 1986. To this day, the

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flow of pilgrims to Hebron does not stop, wishing to touch the living pages of ancient biblical history and bow to the witness of Abraham's hospitality as a symbol of great, active love for God and neighbor. A lot of people came to him for spiritual advice and prayer support, including the nuns of the Gornensky monastery in Jerusalem, all of whom the elder received with love. Father Ignatius rested on the Lord in 1986. To this day, the flow of pilgrims to Hebron does not stop, wishing to touch the living pages of ancient biblical history and bow to the witness of Abraham's hospitality as a symbol of great, active love for God and neighbor. For spiritual counsel and prayer support came to him very many, including the nuns of Gorny Convent in Jerusalem, all of them the old man took with love. Father Ignatius rested in the Lord in 1986. To this day, the flow of pilgrims to Hebron does not stop, wishing to touch the living pages of ancient biblical history and bow to the witness of Abraham's hospitality as a symbol of great, active love for God and neighbor.

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Memories of Sofia Gerali from Kiato, Greece

Sophia Gerali from Kiato, heard one of my radio shows on soundcloud. Having visited Hebron and having been profoundly touched by the sanctity of Fr. Ignaty, she found out about me and contacted me to help in my research. What she told me was simply unexpected and had it not been for her undiluted support and unmitigated enthusiasm over this project, I would have probably pulled the plug on my quest. But, believe it or not, it is people like Mrs Sophia Gerali who are the driving force behind any project initiation. Below are her feelings and impressions of Father Ignatius Raksha along with some memorabilia. “Above is her photo from the certificate paper. At that time, we didn’t get an ID or a passport at that age. I must have been 15.5 to 16 years old then. I kept it as a memory to remember my trip to the Holy Land when I’d gone”.

I will never forget going to so many pilgrimages but when we went there to Hebron and met Father Ignatius, that memory had been inexpungibly engraved on my heart and is even now with me because I felt the Holy Trinity and the hospitality of Abraham so strongly! When we arrived we sat

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at the tree we went to the door and because we were knocking and they didn't open us, we prayed and, lo and behold, the door was suddenly flung open. The door hulked large or so it seemed to my girlish eyes. I glanced around and saw that there was no one behind it and I darted like an arrow to see who had opened it and there was no one in front except a tall, gaunt ascetic who was already in front of the altar and I was justifiably surprised how he got there and how he had opened the door so swiftly. Obviously, he was a saint or how else could he have flown inside the Church? They prayed. We had caught them at the time of prayer, although I don't think they had stopped their typicon just to open the door. Upon completion of their vespers, an old man, who emanated an unearthly effulgence approached us and invited us to venerate the Holy Icon of Kazan. As he opened his cassock, he unfolded the most beautiful icon I had seen and it seemed unusually big for my childish eyes. The icon was wrapped around his neck with a chain and there was a heavenly frangrance emanating from him. I thought he was an angel. He was so sweet! But, dazzled by the ineffable beauty of this icon, I dallied and did not step forward to venerate it. It felt like I was stepping over into heaven. The whole mien of this holy man and the icon he was holding captivated me so much that I had literally lost myself in that moment. There was a gleam that struck me and I kept silent for that moment was carved indelibly into my heart.

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The icon of the Theotokos of Kazan which Hegoumen Ignaty venerated so much

Already at the dawn of the history of the Christian Church, fathers, brothers and sisters, believers saw and experienced the power of the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin to God and therefore from the first times they glorified Her all-honorable name, called in prayers and asked for Her help. From hoary antiquity, the divine glory of the Heavenly Queen has shone throughout the world. There are countless mercies shown by the Mother of God to the Christian family.Her blessings, which were manifested to the Orthodox Russian people throughout the thousand-year history of our holy Church, from Baptism in Kiev to the last days, are numerous. Especially the Blessed Virgin extended Her omophorion over the Russian land during the years of disaster. How many times has she shown her help to our Fatherland through the holy icons before which our grandfathers and great-grandfathers prayed during the invasion of foreigners. The presence of many miraculous icons of the Mother of God is an obvious evidence of Her repeated intercession.The image of the Kazan icon is associated with the deliverance of our Motherland at the beginning of the 17th century from enemies and foreigners who then captured the first city of Holy Russia – Moscow. The Russian people rose to defend the Fatherland, but, not relying on themselves, resorted to the help and intercession of the Queen of Heaven. The mi-

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raculous Kazan Icon of the Mother of God was brought to Moscow from the banks of the Volga along with the military militia. Everyone, young and old, imposed a three-day fast on themselves and united in one prayer before the miraculous image And the prayer of faith was answered. At this time, Archbishop Arseny was in captivity in the Kremlin Chudov Monastery, who, like everyone else, offered a prayer to the Mother of God. Suddenly the place of his imprisonment was lit up with heavenly light, and the Monk Sergius of Radonezh appeared before him - a prayer book for the Russian land. The holy hegumen said: “Arseny, your and our prayers have been answered. By the betrayal of the Mother of God, the judgment of God is placed at mercy. Tomorrow Moscow will be in the hands of the besiegers “(Skurat KE Go and teach. Collection of sermons. Sergiev Posad, 1998, p.216). The news of this vision quickly reached the troops, and the soldiers were encouraged. Indeed, the next morning Russian troops liberated the Kremlin. The enemy was driven out, Moscow was liberated, and Russia was saved. As a sign of special gratitude, it was established to annually celebrate this day of the intercession of the Mother of God. This can be said, the second Protection, especially close to all of us, because the event relates to our Fatherland. The soldiers were encouraged. Indeed, the next morning Russian troops liberated the Kremlin.The enemy was driven out, Moscow was liberated, and Russia was saved. As a sign of special gratitude, it was established to annually celebrate

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Hegumen Ignatius was captured during the war

Hegumen Ignatius (Raksha† 1986), the elder Ignatius, who served in Mamvrian oak in Hebron, is a Russian, originally from the Crimea, was captured during the war, ended up in Germany, then in the Holy Land. Hegumen Ignatius worked in the Trinity Cathedral together with the monk George, except for them in the church there were no ministers. The elders did not miss a single night without a prayer before the Lord - they had whole night liturgies, matins, Divine Liturgy, and worked during the day. The elder was the keeper of the holy oak, near which Patriarch Abraham provided hospitality to the three Angels. As soon as bugs, worms started, he immediately called for special doctors. When Abbot Ignatius appeared before the Lord in the He-

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bron temple, one branch of an ancient oak tree was still green.Once at noon, when Ignatius stood on the balcony, the Most Holy Trinity appeared to him, like the Forefathers, in the form of three wanderers. Since then, at 13 o'clock in the afternoon strange flowers appear at this place every day, tender, blue - for a short time, for about ten minutes, then disappear, as if they were not there. No one is able to either pick a flower or dry it. Elder Ignatius had eyesight above natural. He was often beaten by demons. Abbess Theodora personally was a witness: they are sitting, talking in a calm atmosphere, the old man will leave for a moment, and he will return full of blood. "What's wrong with you, father ?!" "Nothing, nothing, thank God for everything," the old man will meekly smile, and they continue the conversation. Once, an old man told mother Theodore: "In Holy Russia there will still be the Anointed of God," and he burst into tears.Another time, he pointed with his hand from the balcony: "The earth is on fire, the earth is burning, can not you see?" "No," mother admitted honestly."And I see, and I'm scared.Read the Gospel, Psalter!The end of the world is approaching, and people are still unrighteous and cruel, and they don't hear that death is coming to them. And now - the last time the Lord punished people with water, and this time he will punish them with fire.

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In Hebron, the Mamre oak has fallen!

It was a very important symbol, the death of which has always been associated in the view of mankind with the coming of the End of the World Abraham's Oak fell in Palestine, the death of which, according to legend, is one of the signs of the end of the world.When a dead tree fell, the young shoot did not suffer, Alexander Vorsin reports and publishes a photo of the collapsed tree. The Mamre Oak, or Abraham's Oak, is the tree under which, according to the Bible, Abraham received God.The Bible says that "the Lord appeared to him at the oak grove of Mamre, when he was sitting at the entrance to the tent, in the heat of the day" (Gen. 18: 1). Abraham suggested to the three angels, who appeared to him in the guise of travelers: "Rest under this tree" (Gen. 18: 4). According to legend, the tree has survived to this day, it is an evergreen Palestinian oak, which is believed to be about 5,000 years old. It is located on the territory of the Russian monastery of the Holy Trinity in Hebron, 3 km. Northwest of Mahpela Cave, on the West Bank of the Jordan River, in the Palestinian Authority. The tree was discovered by the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin). In 1868, he purchased a piece of land on which an oak grew. In the XX century, the monastery of the Holy Trinity was built nearby. After the October Revolution, the land passed into the possession of the ROCOR, since 1997 it has been trans-

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ferred to the ROC. According to experts, as a result of construction work carried out in the seventies of the XX century, when a circular retaining wall in the shape of a bowl was erected around the ancient tree, a gradual but irreversible process of withering away of the oak roots began. A quarter of a century later, this led to the fact that the trunk of the tree was completely dry. The last green leaf on the main trunk of the Mamvri oak was observed in April 1996. Before the tree dries up, it was believed that two parts of the tree symbolize two covenants, the withered part is the Old Testament (the period of the fulfilled law, a new covenant was given to replace it: Matthew 5:17, Rom. 10: 4, Hebrews 8:13), green - New Testament (covenant according to the law of the spirit of life: Rom. 8: 1,2). There is an Orthodox tradition that the death of this tree is one of the signs of the end of the world. Around 1997, a new young shoot began to grow from the root of the tree, which gave believers reason to believe that the world has once again been pardoned. For 20 years, it has developed into a bushy green sapling. As reported by the UOJ

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+ + +

From the Editor: We would not attach great importance to the shoot, which allegedly originated from the rhizome of the Oak and began to develop since 1997. Knowing the falsity of the forces of the World “behind the scenes”, we fully admit that this sprout was ... just planted, and it has nothing to do with the Mamvri oak itself!”Why would they?” - you ask? Yes, then, in order to calm the population of the planet! Everyone knows that the death of this symbolic tree is directly related to the End of the World, which means that people can think about their fate, stop committing sins, start repenting - save souls! And this is precisely the forces of Evil that cannot be allowed - therefore they will go to any falsification: only so that people - until the very end of the World - continue to live their former wild life, leading to hell! That is why since 2016 there has been a gross falsification of another miracle, the termination of which is directly related to the End of the World - the descent of the Holy Fire!For three years in a row, the fire carried out of the Kuvukliya, apparently and signs, is artificial - created! Read an important post on this topic on our website:

http://monomah.org/archives/11197)

Alexey Anatolyevich Cheverda

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The testimony of Mrs Sophia about his power of foresight

He knew my name, says Sofia Kouna from Athens. Fr Ignaty was a saint. Before the Greek groups left the Monastery, he gave them a piece of paper with an answer to their problem. How did he know Greek and how could he have known what their problem had been? Needless to say, he was conversing with the Holy Trinity. No kidding! He was shuffling out of sight and when he returned his mien had a hallowed effulgence. He was suffused with light. Mrs Sophia Gerali from Corinth, is another witness to his sanctity. She contacted me to tell me that she knew Fr Ignatius. She said that He emanated a heavenly scent. He was the reason why after her trip to Hebron, she decided that she wanted to become a nun, a dream which never materialized. When she came back in Greece, her clothing was deeply permeated with the heavenly scent for up to two months'.

– Fr. Ignatius was a holy man! He reposed in the 1980s—I can't remember exactly when—in Hebron where he served all his life, and was buried there. He never washed! He went around in wornout shoes without socks. His hair was tangled like threads. His black nylon habit was oil-soaked, because as I recall he would light all thw 150 lamps by himself. Irene, his niece, on her journey to the Holy Land and her visit to the monastery of the Holy Trinity, was told many wonders about His Holiness. A few days before her return

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to Russia, she fell asleep and saw in the courtyard of the monastery three unknown people, the Holy Trinity which the Saint so much loved and conversed with. Sofia Kouna who granted me the courtesy of an interview from Attica has witnessed the holiness of Hegoumen Ignaty.

She describes :

– Every Easter, the Holy Fire descended and lit his candles. He was a man of deep repentance and tears. He emanated a preternatural light, a sign of his sanctity. One day, some pilgrims visited the monastery of The Holy Trinity in Hebron. Fr Ignaty welcomed them warmly and always treated them to a lavish meal. But when they were gone, Fr Ignaty knew that somebody had stolen something from the Monastery. It was a pilgrim from our group. The next morning Fr Ignaty arrived at the Hotel where we were staying but before he started searching for the robber, whom he knew all along, the guilty fellow rushed to return it. He was obviously lacrymose and deeply contrite. He had not slept all night. He was seized by demons and was foaming. Father Ignaty forgave him and the robber was restored to his former self.

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The miraculous holy image of the Virgin "of the Sign

The great story with the miracle he performed on the Russians in a war with Prince Andreas who received the first navel of the earth from St. Helen, from the holy temple of the resurrection of Christ, made of mambri oak wood. He always held Her in his arms and made the sign of the cross over the worshipers. until the day one took her. Since then, he put a chain and passed it around his neck. God grant us repentance every day of our lives, amen!

Testimony of Hegumen Gerasimos Tavoulareas

We usually serve the Liturgy beginning after the prayer, "Blessed is the Kingdom..." in an hour and a half " says Archimandrite Chrysosto- mos Tavoulareas. But no matter what prayers he pronounced, Fr. Ignatius would bend his knee, and tears would stream endlessly from his eyes! We began the services at three in the morning and ended at 11:30 in the morning. His whole being was immersed in the prayers. His arms would be raised. When he prayed he never al- lowed himself to be distracted by any conversa- tion. We received Communion and pronounced the dismissal. It was close to noon! I had stood on my feet for eight or nine hours! Then we wentinto the house by the church; Fr. Igna-

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tius took out some dried bread, some sweet red wine that he made himself, and some olives. We drank the wine, in which we soaked the dried bread, and ate the olives. I have been a priest for thirty-five years, but I will never forget such reverence and such a Liturgy (not the fatigue, but the Liturgy itself)! Af- ter I became an abbot, they would bring me his wine for the Liturgy

—it was red, sweet, and without any additives.Fr. Ignatius was a holy man! He reposed in the 1980s—I can't remember exactly when—in Hebron where he served all his life, and was buried there. He never washed! He went around in worn-out shoes without socks. His hair was tangled like threads. His black ny- lon habit was oil-soaked, because as I recall hewould light 150 lamps himself. At 2:00 a.m. He rang the bell and for an entire hour afterwards he would light a lamp before every saint—here, there, and everywhere—and make prostrations. Oil dripped down his hands and onto his habit. He had a purse in which he kept an icon of the Mother of God of Kazan, and when you wanted to kiss his hand he would take out this icon. There was simply a fragrance coming from him! He was a real saint. I have never known any other person like him in my life!

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Email Exchanges with Irina Raksha, his niece

Dear Irina,

I am an author and translator from Athens Greece. In my two previous books to the Holy Land, I made a reference to your uncle Hegoumen Ignaty who was a saint. I am planning to write a book on him, as I believe in his sanctity. However, in the absence of important details on his life, I would appreciate it if you could help me by providing me with some information about his youth, his ordination and later his life in Hebron. I love the Saint and because some miraculous incidents have happened I am determined to publish a book about the saint.

Hope you are well!

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Best regards,

Sofia Kioroglou

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In Russian

То: Ирина
Уважаемая
Ирина,
Я автор и переводчик из Афин, Греция.
В двух моих предыдущих книгах о Святой Земле я упоминал о вашем дяде Игумене Игнати, который был святым. Я планирую написать о нем книгу, поскольку верю в его святость.
Однако, в отсутствие важных подробностей о его жизни, я был бы признателен, если бы вы помогли мне, предоставив мне некоторую информацию о его юности, его рукоположении и дальнейшей жизни в Хевроне.
Я люблю святого, и потому что произошло несколько чудесных событий, я полон решимости издать книгу о святом.
Надеюсь, с тобой все хорошо!
С нетерпением жду Вашего ответа! С наилучшими

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пожеланиями,
София Киорглу

Ирина Евгеньевна Ракша
14 Feb 2020, 8:58 p.m
To Sofia Kioroglou-Papadopoulou

Уважаемая София….Спасибо за весточку. И хорошо, что она на русском языке. Спасибо за память о моём родственнике удивительном и прекрасном игумене Игнатии (Иване Ракше). Да, у меня есть и фотографии и некоторые документы его и о нём. Думаю, мне надо их все сканировать и тогда послать Вам по интернету. На это меня благословил мой духовник, священник меня окормляющий.Как только это сделаю, сразу с Вами поделюсь. С удовольствием. Об Игумене Игнатии люди должны знать широко и везде. И это зависит он нас. Мой постулат: Судьба тех, кто ушел, зависит от тех, кто остался. Ирина Ракша.
А Вы напишите мне, пожалуйста, кто ВЫ, где живёте,, чем занимаетесь, и

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почему (кроме чувства любви) решили
писать об Иване Ракше.
Обо мне всё есть на сайте □ПРОЗА-РУ.
Ирина Ракша□ Моя биография и
заслуги и прочее в самом начале
Оглавления
□Планета □ИРИНАРА□, об авторе□.
Желаю Вам всего доброго, здоровья и
помощи Божией.
Сердечно. Ирина Ракша.
Сердечно.
Ирина Евгеньевна Ракша

То: Ирина
Уважаемая Ирина,
Я так рад это слышать. Игумен
Игнатий был святым. Я чувствую, что
он ведет
меня. Я опубликовал 3 книги на
греческом языке, посвященные
Святой Земле, и мои последние две
книги содержали фотографии и
чудесные события с отцом Игнати.
Сейчас я готовлю английскую книгу,
которая содержит чудесные события
с игуменом Игнатием. Я с

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нетерпением жду ваших фотографий и документов, которые можно будет поместить в книгу, чтобы отец Игнатий стал широко известным.
Теперь позвольте мне рассказать вам кое-что обо мне. Я грек и живу в Афинах с моим мужем, которого я встретил в Иерусалиме. Отсюда моя любовь к Святой Земле. Моя встреча с твоим дядей была по Божьему провидению. Я благодарен Богу за то, что он дал мне знать об этом святом.
Мой личный блог: sofiakioroglou.wordpress.com
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaIcMVMQ4uI
Спасибо Ирина за все. Мы должны сделать все возможное, чтобы мир узнал о святости отца Игнатия.
Пусть он благословит нас сверху на небесах. Аминь!
Люблю софию

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In the 1950s – 1980s, he was mentioned as a member of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) (in 1955 - in the rank of hieromonk, in 1964 - in the rank of abbot). In the 1950s – 1960s, he was referred to as mission economy. Head of the Jericho Mission Garden Chapel and the Mission Coastal Chapel in Jordan (Israel). In 1964, he was also mentioned as the head of the church department at the Mamre Oak, the rector of the Cathedral of Sts.Forefathers in Hebron (Israel).

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The Moscow Patriarchate and Sergianism An Essay by Boris Talantov

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: The two texts that follow—they are actually two parts of a single essay—are of crucial importance for an understanding of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Communist Yoke. They were written by a true confessor of Orthodoxy, who died in prison in the Soviet Union in 1971 for having written these and similar texts. They are presented here as a direct response to the plea of the author himself (p. 484 of Russia's Catacomb Saints): "This betrayal... must be made known to all believers in Russia and abroad, because such an activity of the Patriarchate... represents a great danger for all believers." The texts are primary documents exposing with direct and irrefutable proof the conscious betrayal of Russian Orthodoxy by its own hierarchs.Russian Orthodoxy today—betrayed by its hierarchs in the USSR, and represented only by the free bishops abroad and by a remnant of the faithful at home and abroad—lives in expectation of a restoration of true and canonical church order. This will doubtless come only at the longed-for Council of all Russian Orthodoxy after the fall of the Communist regime, when those who have kept the faith will be justified. For this restoration of true order the writings of Boris Talantov will be invaluable testimony. For they come from one who consciously expe-

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rienced the Soviet Yoke from its beginning and they thus testify from within not only to the facts of Russian church life during those years, but more importantly, to the attitude toward them of the Orthodox faithful. Previously this had been known to some extent through those who had escaped from the USSR, but from within the country there was nothing to be heard but the repetitious propaganda of the Moscow Patriarchate, which attempted to drown out the truth and did indeed succeed in duping whole generations of gullible church figures in the West. But now as the culmination of a decade of protests, the true attitudes of the faithful who remain in Russia have become known. Boris Talantov, as these texts reveal, did not leave the communion of the Moscow Patriarchate; even though he was sympathetic to the members of the True Orthodox (Catacomb) Church whom he knew, he nonetheless repeats the standard Soviet terminology in calling this Church a "sect." Here surely, one may be allowed to disagree. Without passing judgment on those who remain in the Patriarchate, we abroad can nonetheless not help but see that the solution of the present crisis of the Moscow Patriarchate—which is actually the culmination, as Talantov points out, of the betrayal of 1927— cannot come from within the Patriarchate alone, but must come from the whole confessing Orthodox Church of Russia: the believers in the Catacombs who remain faithful to the testaments of Metropolitan Joseph and the many bishops in 1927 who declared the "Sergianist"

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Church schismatic, the true believers who remain in the Patriarchate; and the Church Outside of Russia. About the latter it is hardly likely that Talantov could have had any unbiased information. It must be remembered, then, that these documents offer, not a complete picture of the state of Russian Orthodoxy today, but rather an authentic voice of the Orthodox faithful within the USSR, and specifically of the Moscow Patriarchate's own flock. These texts, however, are doubtless some of the primary documents from which the "complete picture" of 20th-century Russian Orthodoxy will one day be known. The two texts are here presented in full, without omissions or additions of any kind, as translated from the Russian manuscripts obtained in 1968 from an absolutely reliable source in Paris by the Rev. Michael Bordeaux of the Center for the Study of Religion and Communism. The two titles and all parentheses and emphases (italics) in the text are those of the original, all notes and comments of the translators have been confined to the footnotes. The texts are published here with the kind permission of Rev. Bordeaux.

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I. SERGIANISM [1], OR ADAPTATION TO ATHEISM (THE LEAVEN OF HEROD)

In England, there has appeared a book by Nikita Strove, Christians in Contemporary Russia,[2] in which he, like others also in the West, in general, approves the activity of Patriarch Sergius, even comparing him with Sergius of Radonezh and Patriarch Ermogen. [3] In the West, Patriarch Sergius is virtually considered to be the savior of the Orthodox Church in Russia. Such an incorrect evaluation of the activity of Patriarch Sergius is based on the fact that Western researchers are not familiar with the underground facts and manifestations of the life of the Russian Orthodox Church. The roots of the profound ecclesiastical crisis which has now been revealed were laid precisely by Patriarch Sergius. In his Appeal to the faithful of August 19, 1927, [4] Metropolitan Sergius set forth new bases for the activity of the Church Administration, which at that very time were called by E. Yaroslavsky [5] an “adaptation” to the atheistic reality of the USSR. “Adaptation” consisted first and foremost of a false separation of all the spiritual needs of man into the purely religious and the socio- political. The Church was to satisfy the purely religious needs of citizens of the USSR without touching on the sociopolitical, which were to be resolved and satisfied by the official ideology of the CPSU. [6] The socio-political activity of every believer, according to this Appeal, should be directed to the building of

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a socialist society under the direction of the CPSU. In its further development this Adaptation resulted in the theory of Soviet theologians, according to which the Communistic organization of society is the only happy and just one, one supposedly indicated by the Gospel itself. At the same time no criticism was allowed of the official ideology, laws, or actions of the authorities Any accusation against the actions of the civil authorities or any doubt of the correctness of the official ideology was considered a deviation from purer religious activity and counter- revolution. The Church Administration headed by Metropolitan Sergius not only did not defend the believers and clergy who went to concentration camps for accusing the arbitrariness and violence of the civil authorities, but even spoke out itself, with slave-like servility, for the condemnation of such people as counter-revolutionaries. In essence Adaptation to atheism represented a maniacal union of Christian dogmas and rites with the socio-political views of the official ideology of the CPSU. In actual fact all religious activity was reduced to external rites. The church preaching of those clergymen who held strictly to Adaptation was totally remote from life and therefore had no influence whatever on the hearers. As a result of this the intellectual, social, and family life of believers, and the raising of the younger generation remained outside the Church's influence. This concealed great dangers for the Church and Christian faith. One cannot worship Christ and at the same time in social and family life tell lies,

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do what is unjust, use violence, and dream of an earthly paradise. Subsequently, Adaptation to atheism culminated in the heretical teaching of H. Johnson concerning a new religion, which in his opinion was to replace the Christian religion and be a synthesis of Christianity and Marxism-Leninism (see H. Johnson, Christianity and Communism, Moscow, 1957). [7] Now the absurdity of H. Johnson's teaching is evident. The Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius of August 19, 1927, made a painful impression on all believers, as a cringing before the atheist authorities. Some made peace with it as an unavoidable evil, while others came out decisively with a condemnation of it. A part of the bishops and faithful separated from Metropolitan Sergius. The bishops who had condemned the Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius were soon arrested and banished to concentration camps, where they died. The ordinary believers who separated formed a special sect, called the True Orthodox Church, which from the very beginning of its formation right up to the present time has been proscribed. Contemporary influential atheists regard Adaptation as a modernization of religion which is politically useful for the CPSU and harmless for the materialistic ideology. "This (Adaptation—our addition. B.T.) is one of the paths to the dying out of religion" (Journal, Science and Religion,[8] no. 12, 1966, p. 78). Many both among us and in the West regarded and regard the Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius as a statement made by the Church Administration under duress, with the aim of pre-

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serving church parishes and clergymen during the time of the despotism of J. Stalin. But this is incorrect. The Communist Party saw in this Appeal the Church's weakness, the readiness of the new Church Administration to fulfill unconditionally any instructions whatsoever of the civil authority, a readiness to give over to the arbitrariness of the authorities, under the guise of counter-revolutionaries, those clergymen who dared to accuse arbitrariness and violence. Here is how E. Yaroslavsky evaluated this in 1927: "With religion, even though Bishop Sergius may have adorned it in whatever worldly garb you may want, with the influence of religion on the masses of workers, we shall wage war, as we wage war with every religion, with every church" (E. Yaroslavsky, On Religion, Moscow, 1957, p. 155). Objectively this Appeal and the subsequent activity of Metropolitan Sergius were a betrayal of the Church. From the end of 1929 until June, 1941, there occurred the mass closing and barbarous destruction of churches, arrests and sentencing by Troikas [9] and secret trials of virtually every single clergyman, most of whom were simply physically exterminated in concentration camps. In 1930 Pope Pius XI came out before world public opinion with a protest against the persecution of Christians in the Soviet Union. How did Metropolitan Sergius react to all this? In the Theophany Cathedral in Moscow, with a cross in his hands, he came out with a declaration that there was no persecution at all against believers and their organizations in the Soviet Union, and there never had

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been any. Individual clergymen and believers, according to his assurance, were tried not for faith, but for counter-revolutionary manifestations against the Soviet regime. Such a declaration was not only monstrous lie, but also a base betrayal of the Church and believers. By this declaration Metropolitan Sergius covered up the monstrous crimes of J. Stalin and became an obedient tool in his hands. It should be noted that although the majority of bishops in 1927 acknowledged Metropolitan Sergius as their head, nonetheless in their activity they did not hold to the "Appeal" and in their sermons they courageously accused the arbitrariness, lawlessness, and cruelty of the civil authorities, called on the people to stand firmly for the faith and help the persecuted. Therefore, for their sermons they were quickly placed in concentration camps and perished there. Of course, many clergymen and believers were placed in concentration camps for no reason at all, as potentially dangerous elements. In these circumstances a courageous statement by Metropolitan Sergius in defense of justice and faith could have had a great significance for the fate of the Russian Orthodox Church, just as the courageous battle for faith and justice of Cardinal Wyszynski had a great significance for the Polish Church at the end of the '40's. And what did Metropolitan Sergius save by his Adaptation and monstrous lie? At the beginning of the Second World War in every region, out of many hundreds of churches there remained five or ten, the majority of priests and almost all the bishops (with

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the exception of a few who collaborated with the authorities like Metropolitan Sergius) had been martyred in concentration camps. Thus Metropolitan Sergius by his Adaptation and lying saved no one and nothing, except his own person. In the eyes of believers he lost all authority, but in exchange he acquired the good will of the "father of the peoples," J. Stalin. The majority of the churches that remained did not acknowledge Metropolitan Sergius. The role of Metropolitan Sergius in the restoration of churches during the Second World War is greatly exaggerated in the West and, in particular, in the book of N. Strove. This evidently speaks of an ignorance of many underground manifestations and facts in the life of the Church in the USSR. The Appeal of Metropolitan Sergius to the believing citizens of the USSR on June 22, 1941, was received by true believers as a new cringing before the despotic regime and a new betrayal of the Church's interests. All believers in Russia regarded and regard the Second World War as the wrath of God for the immense lawlessness, impiety, and persecution of Christians which occurred in Russia from the beginning of the October Revolution. Therefore, not to remind the people and the government of this in an hour of dreadful trials, not to call the people to repentance, not to demand immediately the restoration of churches and the rehabilitation of all innocently condemned citizens of the USSR, was a great sin, a great impiety. Metropolitan Sergius again revealed himself to be an obedient tool of the atheist regime,

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which at that moment wished to use for its own ends the religious feelings of its citizens with the fewest possible concessions from atheism. The restoration of churches within limited and narrow bounds was the State policy of J. Stalin, and not the result of the activity of Metropolitan Sergius. At that time among the people and in the army there was open talk of fundamental changes in domestic regulations in the land. The people hoped that immediately after the end of the war there would be declared freedom of occupation and in particular the liquidation of the collective farms, freedom of party, and freedom of conscience. The opening of churches was the bone which J. Stalin threw to a people worn out by war and hunger. The very opening of churches occurred under the control of State Security. And these organs sought out often priests from among those who remained at liberty or had sat out their term of imprisonment. In the Western Ukraine there were cases when priests refused to celebrate in churches under Metropolitan Sergius, and later Patriarch Alexis, and these same organs put these priests in concentration camps. In many regions the Patriarchate ant the bishops took no part at all in the opening of churches. There were cases when new bishops under one pretext or another even resisted the opening of churches and the assignment to parishes of priests who had been in prison. The restoration of church life was incomplete, external, and temporary. From 1949 on the CPSU began imperceptibly to turn toward putting new pressure on

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the Church. Thus, the opening of churches within narrow bounds was not the work of the hands of Metropolitan Sergius or Patriarch Alexis, but rather this opening was done by the atheist regime itself under pressure from the simple people in order to pacify them.Patriarch Sergius, and later Patriarch Alexis, gathered and placed new bishops who, as distinct from the former bishops, who as a rule perished in the concentration camps (there were, of course, exceptions), were obedient to the Patriarchate and assimilated well the leaven of Herod, i.e., Adaptation to the mighty of this world. Here is how, for example, Bishop Vladimir of Kirov expressed Adaptation in his sermon of May 28, 1967. "We must adapt ourselves to new conditions and circumstances of life like a little stream which, on meeting a rock in its path, goes around it. We live together with atheists and must take them into consideration and not do anything that displeases them." It is interesting that B. V. Talantov was told almost the very same thing at the KGB [10] on February 14, 1967: "You,"—said the KGB agent, addressing Talantov—"demand that all closed churches be opened; but you live together with atheists and must take their wishes into consideration, and they do not wish that churches be opened." In the St. Seraphim church in Kirov on January 20, 1966—the day of commemoration of St. John the Baptist—one priest said in his sermon: "John the Baptist taught everyone very simply: obey the authorities in everything." From this it is evident that the new bishop, having assimilat-

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ed Adaptation to atheism, has become an obedient tool in the hands of the atheist regime, and this is a most ruinous result for the Church of the long activity of Metropolitan, and then Patriarch, Sergius.Adaptation to the atheist regime was clearly and precisely set forth in the book, The Truth about Religion in Russia, published under the editorship of Patriarch Sergius in the last years of his life, with the participation of Metropolitan (now Patriarch) Alexis and Metropolitan Nicholas. [11]In this book Patriarch Sergius and Metropolitans Alexis and Nicholas categorically affirm that there has never been in the USSR any persecution of Christians, that information in the Western press about these persecutions are malicious inventions of the enemies of the Soviet regime, that bishops and priests during the years 1930-41 were sentenced by Soviet courts exclusively for their counterrevolutionary activity, and that the Church Administration itself at that time was in agreement with their being sentenced. The monstrous lie of this affirmation is apparent from the fact that very many priests who were executed or perished in concentration camps under J. Stalin were rehabilitated under N. S. Krushchev. The most courageous fighters for truth and Christian faith are declared in this book to be schismatics, “politicians,” and practically heretics. This book should be anathematized; it will be an eternal shameful memorial of Patriarch Sergius. And now with full justification we can call Adaptation to the atheistic regime by the name of Patriarch Sergius—Sergianism. Did

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Adaptation (Sergianism) save the Russian Orthodox Church? From what has been set forth it is clear that not only did it not save the Russian Orthodox Church during the despotism of J. Stalin, but on the contrary it furthered the loss of genuine freedom of conscience and the conversion of the Church Administration into an obedient tool of the atheistic regime. Cardinal Wyszynski's categorical rejection of Adaptation to the atheistic regime and his subsequent and firm battle for Evangelical truth and genuine freedom of conscience has resulted in the fact that today in Poland the Church [12] in actuality is independent from the State and enjoys considerable freedom. Thus, one cannot defend the Church by a lie. Adaptation is little faith, lack of faith in the power and Providence of God. Adaptation is incompatible with true Christianity, because at its foundation there is a lie, servility before the mighty of this world, and a false separation of spiritual needs into the purely religious and the socio-political. According to the teaching of Christ, faith must direct the intellectual, family, and social life of every Christian. Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world (Matt. 5:13, 14), said Christ, addressing His followers. In accordance with this Cardinal Wyszynski says: "In Poland the Church must penetrate everything: books, schools, upbringing, the people's culture... painting, sculpture and architecture, theater, radio and television... social and economic life" (quoted from the zournal Science and Religion, no. 1, 1967, p. 63).

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II. THE SECRET PARTICIPATION OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE IN THE BATTLE OF THE CPSU AGAINST THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH (THE CRISIS OF THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATION)

THE “ADAPTATION” which was planted by Metropolitan Sergius has resulted in the fact that, beginning in 1960, the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops objectively have secretly participated in all actions of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, a participation directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the propagation of the faith, and the undermining of the latter among the people. The majority of bishops in the period 1960-64 withdrew from the battle against the illegal closure of churches and the illegal removal of priests from registration. The numerous complaints of believers to the Moscow Patriarchate against the illegal closure of churches and the removal of priests from registration remained without any answer.. More than this, the Moscow Patriarchate itself issued a circular concerning the fusion of parishes which did not have sufficient income. As a result of abuse, many churches which did have sufficient income were closed by this circular. Now the atheists who hold power, together with Metropolitan Nikodim, affirm, relying on this circular, that supposedly all the churches closed in the years 1960-64 lacked sufficient income. This lie is repeated in an article in the Kirov Pravda of May 31, 1967: “With an Open Visor.”

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Certain bishops, for example Bishop John, [13] have closed churches themselves and removed worthy priests. All this has become known now from the letters of the Moscow priests N. Eshliman and G. Yakunin, the “Open Letter of Kirov believers,” and many othermaterials.An irrefutable proof that the Moscow Patriarchate has secretly participated in the closing of churches is the fact that neither the bishops (with some exceptions, for example Archbishop Ermogen, who, however, was removed from his See by the Patriarchate), nor the Moscow Patriarchate has ever come out anywhere with a protest against the illegal closure of churches and the removal of priests from registration, and what is more they have even come out with declarations that there was no mass illegal closure of churches in the USSR in the years 1960-64. Churches, according to their assertion, were closed because they did not have sufficient income. With the aim of limiting the propagation of faith and undermining it among the people, the bishops have unconditionally submitted to all the oral directives of the authorities, which have been directed toward the limitation and undermining of faith, and they have demanded the same thing of priests. Thus, for example, Bishop John of Kirov firmly declared to his priests that any one of them who will not unconditionally fulfill the directives of the authorities will be forbidden to serve as a priest.At the same time, the priests and bishops, in fulfilling the oral directives of the authorities, presented these directives to the people as if they came from the

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Church Administration and not from the civil regime, and they even uncanonically demonstrated their lawfulness and necessity.The Patriarchate itself issued a number ofcirculars directed to the limitation and undermining of faith, such was for example, Circular no. 1917, which demanded of priests as an official obligation to cooperate in the registration of passports while celebrating private services on request. [14] All this is discussed in detail in the letters of the Moscow priests, in the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers," and other letters and complaints of believers. Here are the chief measures directed toward the limitation and undermining of faith which are being carried out by the authorities of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, with the participation of the clergy:

1. Obligatory registration of passports before the celebration of certain services by request. [15] 2. Not allowing children of school age to receive confession, communion, or baptism. 3. Chasing beggars out of churches and church yards. 4. Forbidding believers to spend the night on church porches 5. Institution of the time for celebrating services by request in village churches of the Kirov region, during the summertime, at from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. 6. Forbidding the administering of communion and unction to the sick at home without special permission. [16] Certain bishops, for example Bishop John of Kirov, by their amoral conduct, outrageous acts, and despotic willfulness have striven to undermine faith among the people; and the Moscow Patriar-

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chate, knowing of the intolerable conduct of such bishops from the numerous complaints of believers, not only has not brought such bishops to ecclesiastical trial, but has even promoted them. Such bishops have removed worthy priests from parishes and placed unworthy persons in their place. All this has led to the moral corruption of the clergy and a total undermining of faith in the Church. In conformity with Adaptation to atheism, sermons in church as a rule have become scholastic discourses, remote from life, on religious themes. Because of their remoteness from time and space, they cannot act in any way on the hearers. In such sermons there is lacking even any mention of such basic vices, errors, and faults in contemporary life as lying, flattery, the breaking up of families, moral corruption, the atheistic upbringing of children, servile fear before the mighty of this world, and injustice. The Moscow Patriarchate has made the rejection of Christian apologetics, of the ideological battle with atheism, the chief principle of its activity, both within the country and outside. Such religious-moral instruction on the part of the contemporary Russian Orthodox Church cannot interest the younger generation or act positively upon it.Thus, the religious-moral instruction of the Russian Orthodox Church is such that it cannot lead to the propagation of faith among the younger generation. By this alone the continued existence of the Church is undermined. In every diocese there is felt an acute insufficiency of priests even for the small number of churches that are

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open. For the propagation of faith and its strengthening it is essential to strive to increase in each diocese the number of worthy priests who are devoted to the Church and qualified to spread the faith. But the bishops have absolutely withdrawn from the selection, instruction, and training of the clergy ranks, by which they definitively undermine faith and the Church. The number of theological schools and the number of those studying in them is so small that it cannot even make up the natural decrease of clergymen. Education and instruction in the theological schools are set up in such a way that out of them there come bureaucrats in cassocks who are ready to adapt themselves to external circumstances by any means whatever for the sake of acquiring a secure, easy, and undisturbed life in an atheistic State. In them the chief thing is killed: idealism, courage, and aspiration for justice. The spirit of the Seminaries (and Academies) is Adaptation. In the theological schools there is being conducted an intensified recruitment of students as secret agents of the KGB, especially in the foreign divisions of the Academies. This at the present time the Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops are secretly participating in the organized actions of the atheist regime (CPSU) which are directed toward the closing of churches, the limitation of the propagation of faith and its undermining in our country. The activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad is directed, in the first place, to covering up, by means of shameless lying and slander, the mass illegal closure of churches,

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the oppressions of believers and their organizations and the secret administrative measures directed toward the undermining of faith within the USSR. In the second place, the activity of the Patriarchate is directed to defecting as much as possible, by means of deceit and lying, the development of the Christian movement in the whole world on to a fallen path and thereby undermining it. Such, for example, was the proposal of the Moscow Patriarchate at the Rhodes Conference of Orthodox Churches to renounce Christian apologetics and the ideological battle against contemporary atheism. [17] The activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad is a conscious betrayal of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Christian faith. She steps forth on the world arena as a secret agent of worldwide anti- Christiazity. Metropolitan Nikodim is betraying the Church and Christians not out of fear but for conscience's sake; thus a complete unmasking of his and the Moscow Patriarchate's traitorous activity will mean the end of his shady career. But the time has come for the unmasking of the traitorous activity of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad, the hour of judgzent upon Metropolitan Nikodim. [18] An irrefutable proof of the undermining, traitorous activity abroad of the Moscow Patriarchate is an event which arose in connection with the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis." In August, 1966, this letter was sent by believers to Patriarch Alexis. In it the believers expressed their support for the letter of the Moscow priests N. Eshliman and G. Yakunin

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and described the misfortunes which the parishes of the Kirov region had suffered as a result of the lawless deeds of the authorities of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and Bishop John of Kirov. This letter, which accuses the arbitrariness and lawlessness of the local civil authorities and the Church Administration, does not touch at all upon the Soviet social and governmental order and has no relation whatever to the organs of State Security. The letter was signed by 12 believers of the Kirov region with exact addresses given. Eight of those who signed the letter were from the city of Kirov (formerly Vyatka). Among their number was the author of the letter B. V. Talantov, whose signature and address stood first. He is well known to the Patriarchate and to Metropolitan Nikodim. Three of those who signed were from the city of Nolinsk, and one of these was the student of the Odessa Seminary Nikodim Nikolaevich Kamenskikh. The twelfth believer who signed the letter was Agrippina Dimitrievna Zyryanova, an elderly woman from the city of Belaya Kholunitsa. She had been constantly working for the opening of the All Saints church in the city of Belaya Kholunitsa, which had been illegally dosed in 1962. This letter became known abroad, and on December 8, 1966, BBC Radio revealed in brief its content. Although in essence the letter was not a complete unmasking of the unworthy activity of the Moscow Patriarchate nonetheless it threw a shadow abroad on all the assurances of Metropolitan Nikodim and others concerning the well-

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being of the Russian Orthodox Church. Evidently this very much disturbed the Patriarchate and the KGB. They began to act simultaneously and according to an agreed-upon plan. On February 14, 1967, B. V. Talantov was summoned to the Kirov Administration of the KGB. Here, after he had been threatened at first with prison, it was proposed that he renounce the "Open Letter" in the form of a written declaration that could be published in one of the newspapers. Evidently he was to have declared in writing that he had never composed or signed the "Open Letter" that had become known abroad. He categorically refused to do this and confirmed in written form that he was the author precisely of the letter that had become known abroad, and likewise of the letter to the newspaper Izvestia (received by the newspaper on July 19, 1966), and that he was ready to bear responsibility for the content of these letters. At that time he did not understand at all why there was demanded of him the renunciation of his own signature in a written declaration which, what is more, was to be published in one of the central newspapers. Later events solved this enigma. On February 25, 1967, Radio BBC revealed the replies to questions put to Metropolitan Nikodim in connection with the "Open Letter from Kirov." He declared this letter anonymous and therefore not deserving of trust. To confirm the sincerity of his words he expressed his readiness to make an oath on the Cross and the Gospel. The name and address of B. V. Talantov without any doubt were well known to him

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from the previous letters of B. V Talantov. Then why did he make such a risky declaration? One would think that he was trusting in the impossibility for the Kirov believers to refute abroad the deceit of his declaration. But subsequent events compel one to think that he was trusting that the KGB by threats would force the believers who had signed the "Open Letter" to renounce their signatures. At the very time when, in London, in the pompous grandeur of his social position Metropolitan Nikodim was striving by a false oath to prove the anonymity and dubiousness of the "Letter from Kirov," in Kirov itself at the KGB Administration it was proposed to B. V. Talantov, with threats of prison, hat he renounce his signature under this letter. Evidently the coincidence of these events was not accidental. B. V. Talantov, indignant at the shameless lie of Metropolitan Nikodim, on March 19, 1967, sent to Patriarch Alexis a new letter, in which he confirmed the authenticity of the "Open Letter of Kirov.Believers" and sternly accused the impious action of Metropolitan Nikodim. At the same time he sent a copy of his letter to the Patriarch to Odessa to his young friend N. N. Kamenskikh, who at this time was a student in the second class of the Odessa Theological Seminary. Through N. N.Kamenskikh this letter, and likewise the impious statement of Metropolitan Nikodim in London, became known to almost all the students at the Odessa Theological Seminary and to many residents of the city of Odessa. From this moment on new events began to occur. The letter of B. V. Talantov to

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Patriarch Alexis of March 19, 1967, became known to the Kirov administration of the KGB at the end of March or in the first days of April, apparently through Bishop Vladimir of Kirov. Immediately after this the seven Kirov believers who had signed the letter were called to the Kirov city council one at a time for interrogation. Here the secretary of the city council, A. Y. Ostanina, together with a KGB agent (the latter was not present in all cases), threatened each one with prison if he would sign any other document composed by "the dangerous political criminal" Talantov. Notwithstanding all the intimidations, none of those interrogated renounced his signature under the "Open Letter." Bishop Vladimir of Kirov traveled to Odessa and on April 12 he visited for some reason Archbishop Sergius. On April 15 B. V. Talantov informed his friend N. N. Kamenskikh, by a letter sent to the Seminary, of the interrogations in Kirov of the believers who had signed the "Open Letter." But this letter N. N. Kamenskikh did not receive. On April 26 the Inspector of the Seminary Alexander Nikolaevich Kravchenko summoned N.N.Kamenskikh, read him B.V.Talantov's letter of April 15, and demanded of him that he renounce in written form his support of the "Open Letter" of B. V. Talantov. N. N. Kamenskikh had either to renounce the genuineness of his own signature (meaning that his name and address had been put without his knowledge), or declare that B. V. Talantov had somehow deceived him. A. N. Kravchenko warned N. N. Kamenskikh that if he did not make such a

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declaration he would be excluded from the Seminary. In order to win N. N. Kamenskikh to his side, A. N. Kravchenko made use of the following sly tactic. He said: “Write this declaration, and I won’t show it to anyone. When you finish the Seminary I will give it back to you.” But N. N. Kamenskikh saw through the Inspector’s trick and categorically refused to sign the declaration that was demanded of him. At the same time he asked the Inspector to give him the letter of B. V. Talantov, inasmuch as it was addressed to him. The Inspector refused to give him the letter and ordered him to think about his fate. From this moment there began a battle between N. N. Kamenskikh and the leadership of the Seminary, which was fulfilling the will of Metropolitan Nikodim and the KGB. For a whole month the entire Seminary followed this battle with intense interest.One might call it the war of Nikodim the small with Nikodim the great.The first is small both in age (he is 24 yzars old) and in his position in society. The second is of mature years and high position in the Church and in Soviet society. Nikodim Kamenskikh is the son of a believing Christian who was banished to the Kirov region. Want and hunger in childhood and adolescence, constant endurance from the age of 17 of threats, insults, and oppressions for his open confession of Christian faith—have left their imprint on N. N. Kamenskikh. He suffers from a stomach ulcer. From the age of 17 he served as an altar-boy in the church in the village of Bais in the Urzhumsk district of the Kirov region. At this young age he courageous-

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ly defended the church in the village of Bais against illegal closure. Twice on this account he traveled to Moscow to the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (see the letter of B. V. Talantov to the newspaper Izvestia of July 19, 1966) and by this drew on himself the anger of the local authorities. When he was summoned for military service to the Urzhumsk district military committee, at his medical examination he categorically refused to take off his neck cross, and for this he was sent for medical examination to the psychiatric hospital in the city of Kotelnich. After many trials and abuses hewas excused from military service on account of illness (stomach ulcer), but he was not left in peace. At the beginning of 1963 the local authorities sent the "fanatic" Nikodim out of the city of Bais and he became a homeless laborer-stovemaker, earning his living by sporadic jobs. By performing work too difficult for the state of his health he earned 30 to 40 rubles a month. The militia of Urzhumsk district fined him at this time, as a "parasite," 30 rubles, thus depriving him of his living for a whole month. Finally with great difficulty he found work and registered [19] in the city of Nolinsk. But want, a wandering life, and overwork put him in a hospital cot for a long time. After all these adventures he succeeded in 1965 in entering the Odessa Theological Seminary. For the whole course of his conscious life he has seen around him and has himself personally endured insults and oppressions for his open confession of the Christian faith. In his own life's experience he became

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convinced that true believing Christians are the pariahs of Soviet society. He signed the “Open Letter of Kirov believers” not with ink but with his own blood. Therefore it is understandable that he could not renounce his support of this letter, and he began courageously to battle for justice with Nikodim the great, who, having by cunning Adaptation attained high rank, human glory and wealth, entered on the path of injustice. In this battle Nikodim the small placed all hishope in the invisible God, while Nikodim the great placed his hope in visibly-mighty human power and strength.On May 7 B. V. Talantov, surmising by the silence of N.N. Kamenskikh that his letter of April 15 had not arrived, sent him atthe Seminary a new letter in which he repeated the content of the letter of April 15. At the same time he sent a letter to the Seminary to the seminarian of the third class, Ivan Ilyich Naumov, a friend of N. N. Kamenskikh, in which he asked I. I. Naumov to communicateto N. N. Kamenskikh the content of his letters of April 15 and May 7, if he had not received them, and likewise to give his greetings to seminarian Leonid Michadovich Beresnev. These letters were received by the Seminary not later than May 12 or 13 and were intercepted by Inspector A. N. Kravchenko, who did not even tell the addressees about them. From these letters he learned that I. I. Naumov and L. M. Beresnev were sympathetic to Nikodim Kamenskikh. Evidently the Inspector A. N. Kravchenko checked all letters coming to the seminarians, at the assignment of the KGB. In order to clarify the

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"freedom and secrecy of correspondence," one must point out that N. N. Kamenskikh, thinking that his letters sent to Talantov were not reaching the latter, sent him during May two letters addressed to D. I. Okulov, janitor of the St. Seraphim church in Kirov, who was well acquainted with B. V. Talantov. D. I. Okulov did not receive either letter. This means that someone working at the St. Seraphim church, at the assignment of the KGB, was checking all letters that came to this church and holding them back at his discretion. Thus, secret agents of the KGB control all correspondence coming from the Seminary, the churches and "suspicious" believers. On May 17 the Inspector, A. N. Kravchenko, summoned I. I. Naumov and L. M. Beresnev and demanded of them that they persuade Nikodim Kamenskikh to write a declaration renouncing his support of the "Open Letter." He told them that if they did not act on Nikodim in the direction he wished they would be excluded from the Seminary as his accomplices. On May 19, Nikodim Kamenskikh gave to the Inspector of the Seminary A. N. Kravchenko an official declaration, wherein he once again confirmed the authenticity of his signature and his agreement with the content of the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers." On May 21 the Inspector told Nikodim that he must appear the next morning, May 22, at the KGB at the address 43 Babel, Bureau of Passports Garbus 3. Nikodim Kamenskikh, after writing down this address, calmly said that he would not go to the KGB Administration until he received an official notification.

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This caused the Inspector to lose his self-control, and he began to reproach Nikodim for going against the Patriarch, because he supported the Moscow priests. He concluded his discourse with the angry words: “If you do not leave the Seminary voluntarily, you will be turned out, and you will be sorry when you go home.” On May 22 Nikodim was summoned to the diocesan administration and here by telephone an official of the Council for Religious Affairs asked him why he had not appeared at the KGB Administration. He replied that he would not go there until he received an official notification. On May 24 the Rector of the Seminary took from N. N. Kamenskikh his military card and passport and told him that he was to be expelled from Odessa. He replied that all blame for this rested on the Rector and the Inspector. On May 29 the Rector and the Inspector of the Seminary proposed to Nikodim Kamenskikh that he leave the Seminary “at his own wish.” He refused to do this. In the evening the Faculty Council excluded him from the student-body of the Seminary for failing to conform to the spirit of the Seminary. He was given a roll in which it was stated that he is transferred in the first category to the third class, and a certificate of exclusion. On June 19 he sent a declaration from the city of Kirov to the Patriarch in which he again confirmed his agreement with the “Open Letter” and asked that he be allowed to undertake studies in the third class. On June 20 the militia of the city of Nolinsk refused to register him at the place of his former residence, and he again

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became homeless pauper. But the battle was not yet finished. On May 20 four of the persons who had signed the "Open Letter" sent a declaration to the Patriarch, in which they protested against the deceitful declaration abroad of Metropolitan Nikodim. In April A. D. Zyryanova from the city of Belaya Kholunitsa (the twelfth of the signers of the "Open Letter") was put in an insane asylum, from which her sister took her out. On May 31 in Kirov Pravda there was printed the article of S. Lyubovikov, "With an Open Visor," filled with slander and threats against the author of the "Open Letter," B. V.Talantov. All persons who signed the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers" were subjected to threats and repressive measures, but they did not renounce their signatures or their agreement with the Letter. Now the "Open Letter of Kirov Believers to Patriarch Alexis," broadcast on the BBC on December 8, 1966; the declaration of Metropolitan Nikodim abroad concerning the anonymity and unauthenticity of this Letter, broadcast on the BBC on February 25, 1967; the pressure subsequently brought to bear by the organs of State Security (KGB) and the leadership of the Odessa Theological Seminary on the persons who signed this letter, with the aim of compelling them to renounce their signatures; finally, their firm support of this Letter, notwithstanding threats and repressive measures—all this constitutes irrefutable proof of the traitorous activity abroad of the Moscow Patriarchate and their secret cooperation with the atheists who hold power.

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The documents confirming this are:

1. Tape recording of the BBC Radio broadcast of February 25, 1967.

2. The letter of B. V. Talantov to the Patriarch of March 19, 1967.

3. The declaration of N. N. Kamenskikh addressed to the Inspector of the Odessa Theological Seminary of May 19, 1967.

4. The letter of a group of Kirov believers to Patriarch Alexis of May 20, 1967.

5. The declaration of N. N. Kamenskikh addressed to Patriarch Alexis on June l9, 1967.

6. A copy of the certificate excluding N. N. Kamenskikh from the student-body of the Odessa Theological Seminary, of May 29, 1967, notarized.

7. The article of O. Lyubovikov, “With an Open Visor,” in Kirov Pravda for May 31, 1967.

The Adaptation to atheism implanted by Metropolitan Sergius has concluded with the betrayal of the Orthodox Russian Church on the part of Metropolitan Nikodim and other official representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate abroad. This betrayal, irrefutably proved by the documents cited, must be made known to all believers in Russia and abroad, because such an activity of the Patriarchate, relying on cooperation with the KGB, represents a great danger for all believers. In truth the atheistic leaders of the Rus-

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sian people and the princes of the Church have gathered together against the Lord and His Christ. The accusation by the whole people of the betrayal of the princes of the Church will inevitably lead to a crisis of the Church administration, but not to any kind of church schism, as certain ill-wishers of the Church affirm, as well as people who unconsciously follow them. Believers must cleanse the Church of false brethren and false pastors (the betrayer-bishops and priests) in accordance with the commandment of the Holy Apostle Paul: “Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.”Only after such a cleansing is a true regeneration of the Church possible. Many true believers of Russia have fervently prayed to God that He would show believers facts that would indisputably prove the secret betrayal by the bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, if it exists. Now these facts, by God’s mercy, are revealed to all who can really hear and see. About a hundred years ago the Optina Elders predicted that a time would come when in Russia there would be impious bishops. Now this time has arrived. But because of the corruption and betrayal of the bishops the believers should not disperse to their homes and organize separate sects, but rather preserving unity, they should begin the accusation by the whole people of the corrupt false pastors and cleanse the Church of them. August, 1967 (Signature) B. V. Talantov.

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Epilogue

Slanders and threats had a painful effect on the wife of B. V. Talantov, Nina Agafangelovna Talantova. As a result of her painful sufferings, and having suffered already for a long time from a hypertonic condition, on September 7 she had a stroke, and she died on December 16, 1967.

Agrippina Dimitrievna Zyryanova, the twelfth of the signers of the "Open Letter," died in a hospital on December 27, 1967. The threats hastened the approach of death. All those who signed the "Open Letter" suffered in one degree or another, but they did not renounce their signatures. By the Ukase of Patriarch Alexis of June 6, 1967, the Inspector of the Odessa Theological Seminary, A. N. Kravchenko, was awarded the Order of Prince Vladimir, second degree (see the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, no. 8, 1967). By decree of the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of April 4, 1967, the Rector of the Odessa Theological Seminary, Archimandrite Theodosius, was raised to the rank of bishop. By decree of the Holy Synod of October 7, 1967 (see JMP, no. 8, 1967), Bishop Vladimir of Kirov was assigned as Bishop of Berlin and Exarch in Central Europe, and by the Ukase of Patriarch Alexis of October 20, 1967, he was raised to the rank of Archbishop (see JMP,no. 11, 1967). March 30, 1968 (signature) B. V. Talantov EDITORS' CONCLUSION: On June 12, 1969, Boris Talantov was arrested, and on September 3 he was sentenced to two years in prison for "anti-Soviet

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activities." He died in prison on January 4, 1971. And thus it would seem, as the world judges, that evil triumphs. Boris Talantov and his courageous fellow-confessors are persecuted, suffer, and die; while for Metropolitan Nikodim not only has the "hour of judgment" not come, but his status seems still to rise. The Moscow Patriarchate gains new prestige and a new ally by its sponsorship of the "autocephaly" of the American Metropolia [OCA]. And Orthodox Christians in America do not even suspect that they have become passive accomplices of a diabolic program of betrayal and anti-Christianity in the name of Orthodoxy. But evil triumphs only in the eyes of men of little faith. "One cannot defend the Church by a lie." The True Orthodox Christians of these last days are defeated on every front: mocked by the world and by the betrayers of Orthodoxy, despised, persecuted. And yet for one thing they are unconquerable: they stand in the truth. And thus, as our God is Truth, their ultimate victory is certain. Only, may the "hour of judgment," come soon for the betrayers of Orthodoxy! (Metropolitan Nikodim, in fact, died suddenly in 1978 in Rome during an audience with Pope John Paul I, literally in the arms of the Pope, and the first prayers for his repose were performed by Roman Catholic clergy. His sudden death among those foreign to Orthodoxy, and who indeed seek to draw the Orthodox Church into another false "union", can only be interpreted by true Orthodox Christians as a proof of Metropolitan Nikodim's betrayal of Orthodoxy.)

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Endnotes

1. Sergianism:Sergievshchina. This word is not precisely translatable into English, but is approximately "the Sergianist affair," with a pejorative connotation.

2. London, 1967; original edition in French:Les Chretiens en U.R.S.S., Paris, 1963. Nikita Struve is a Russian intellectual of the "Paris" school and present editor of the Vestnik of the Russian Student Christian Movement.

3. Outstanding Russian saints of the 14th and 16th centuries.

4. The Appeal (Declaration) of Metropolitan Sergius was actually issued on July 16/29, 1927, but it was first published in the official Soviet newspaper Izvestia on August 19.

5. Head of the League of Militant Atheists, in charge of the antireligious propaganda and activities conducted by the Soviet regime.

6. Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

7. Hewlett Johnson, the notorious "Red Dean of Canterbury," a "Christian" apologist for Communism, wrote his book in English under the title vChristians and Communism (London, 1956). That Soviet authorities should immediately have this book translated and printed in Moscow reveals that they are not entirely opposed to "religion"— not to a Communist form of religion!

8. A leading official Soviet anti-religious periodical.

9. Troika: a committee of three secret police officials who

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sentenced their victims without hearing or appeal.

10. State Security-Secret Police; known earlier under the initials NKVD, Cheka, and (originally) GPU.

11. Of Krutitsk, notorious apologist of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Soviet regime abroad after the Second World War. He later fell from favor and died under mysterious circumstances in 1961.

12. I.e., the Roman Catholic Church, which is dominant in Poland.

13. Of Kirov; see below.

14. Treby: baptisms, funerals, etc.

15. This important rule is a part of the general system of terror that still prevails in the USSR for behevers. These records are transmitted by local authorihes to places of employment, etc., and the believer who dares ask for a baptism, funeral, or some other open service finds himself soon out of a job end in general ostracized from society.

16. A few months after this was written, this very rule was applied against Talantov's dying wife, as Talantov himself describes in his "Complaint to the Attorney General of the Soviet Union" of April 26, 1968 (English text in Religion in Communist Dominated Areas, Aug. 15/31, 1968): "On the day of her death, I wished to have the rite of unction performed for her, as she desired. But the Dean of the sole remaining open Orthodox church in the city of Kirov, that of St. Seraphim, told me that the local authorities forbade the rite of unction to be performed in homes. This deplorable

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case demonstrates that believing Christians in the city of Kirov are deprived nowadays even of those rights that they were given by J. V. Stalin."

17. This occurred in 1961. The question of atheism and the means of battling against it were on the agenda of this Conference but at the objection of Metropolitan (then Archbishop) Nikodim the question was dropped.

18. Here Talantov seems to be expressing the fervent hope of many in the ideological "underground" in the USSR, rather than any immediately impending event. This is corroborated by the report of a Russian Orthodox student from America concerning a meeting of members of the widespread "Democratic Movement" which he had the rare privilege of attending in Leningrad early in 1970 Some of those present expressed their opinion on the subject of the "autocephaly" which was just then being granted the American Metropolia by the Moscow Patriarchate. Their attitude was summed up by one member who, mentioning that outspoken protest against the Patriarchate was finally becoming evident in the USSR, castigated the "naive Americans" thus: "What are you Americans doing? Here for 50-odd years we've been trying to minimize the popular authority of any and all such governmental agencies as the Moscow Patriarchate, and you, in conditions of freedom, undo all our work by accepting their authority!"

19. There is no freedom of movement in the USSR. Each citizen must have a passport in order to live anywhere, and

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he must register with local authorities on entering or leaving any town—and this registration may bc refused at the whim of the local authorities.

20. I Corinthians 5:13. From Ivan Andreyev's Russia's Catacomb Saints (Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982), 463-86.

Hegumen Ignatius Raksha Lived in the Holy Land (Israel). In the 1950s - 1980s.mentioned as a member of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) (in 1955 - in the rank of hieromonk, in 1964 - in the rank of abbot).In the 1950s - 1960s.referred to as mission economy. Head of the Jericho Mission Garden Chapel and the Mission Coastal Chapel in Jordan (Israel).In 1964 he was also mentioned as the head of the church department at the Mamre Oak, the rector of the Cathedral of Sts.Forefathers in Hebron (Israel).

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His glasses

His watch

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“You do not have to explain every single drop of water contained in a rain barrel. You have to explain one drop—H_2O. The reader will get it.”

—George Singleton

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Author's Bio

Sofia Kioroglou is an author and a reporter who loves God and his people.Hegumen Ignaty was a selected vessel of the Holy Spirit. With his blessings from the heavens, I have endeavored to adumbrate the life and his miracles in these days of apostacy as he had very accurately predicted we would see coming.

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